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A DEFENCE

OF

1

PHONETIC SPELLING;

DRAWN FROM

A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH ALPHABET AND ORTHOGRAPHY;

WITH A REMEDY FOR THEIR DEFECTS.

BY R. G. LATHAM, M.A., M.D., F.R.S.

Robert
Gordon
1

LONDON:

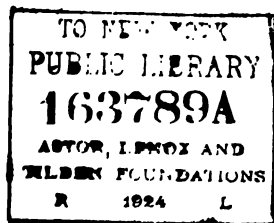
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A DEFENCE OF PHONETIC SPELLING.

SECTION I.

PREFATORY REMARKS.

The present contribution to the cause of Phonetic Spelling is separated from its predecessors by an interval of more than thirty-five years. Between the beginning of 1834 and the end of 1835 three short works upon the same subject were published in quick succession.⁽¹⁾ Signs of zeal of this kind stand in strong contrast to the silence by which they were followed. It is not, however, without a purpose that they are referred to; for the dates are meant to show that I am neither a recent convert nor a laborer of the eleventh hour. Indeed I may truly say that, from first to last, the subject has rarely been out of my mind; so that I have watched with interest what others more courageous than myself effected during the interval. Much was done then; more, however, has to be done now: for the present time not only encourages additional exertion but imperatively demands it.

It is not, however, as a mere observer that I trouble the reader with this introduction, though the difference between the state of opinion in 1872 and 1835 is sufficient to command our best attention, and to awaken our most sanguine expectations. What I more especially wish to show is that, if I have not been able to form something like a matured judgement on the question, it has not been for want of either time or opportunity.

Again, I have no system of my own either to advocate or abandon. Taking these two facts together we have, perhaps, the elements of a dispassionate criticism.

1. "An Address to the Authors of England and America, on the Necessity of Permanently Remodeling their Alphabet and Orthography," etc. By R. G. Latham, B.A., Cambridge, 1834.

"Abstract of Bask's Essay on the Sibilants, and his Mode of Transcribing Works in the Georgian and Armenian Languages, by Means of European Letters; with Remarks." By R. G. Latham, B.A., Cambridge, 1834.

"A Gramatical Sketch of the Greek Language." By R. G. Latham, B.A., Cambridge, 1835.

The interval has given us,—

1. The construction and promulgation of a truly Phonetic Alphabet.

2. An able "Plea for Phonetic Spelling" by a writer who, even among professed scholars and practised logicians, is, undeniably, master of his subject.

3. A general awakening of public opinion on the matter, the result of which has been an incipient literature connected with the subject, and a free ventilation of opinion.

4. The arrival of a time when everything connected with primary education forces itself upon the mind of every man, woman, and child who speaks the English language.

When once a question becomes one of economy it is sure to command attention: and the economy here involved is of two kinds. The money question I leave to the rate-payers, fully confident that it will not be ignored by them. This, however, is but a small part of the matter. To the child of the poor man everything that takes him away from directly remunerative employment is a tax upon his time,—the stuff whereof life is made. And it is much the same, though in a less degree, with the sons and daughters of the rich. But in learning to read, every unnecessary obstacle is so much waste: and that the English language abounds and overflows with mischievous obstacles of this kind, is a point upon which it may confidently be said that every competent judge has pronounced a verdict. There is waste throughout,—injurious waste, unnecessary waste, remediable waste; waste which those whom it most injures will soon be constrained to investigate, to condemn, and to abate.

The "Address," etc., which has just been alluded to, was written with a genuine rhetorical exordium, and with a motto for the reformers of the day,

'Tis hard if 'tis not lawful to present
Reform in writing as in Parliament.

Byron, "Hints from Horace."

and a prophecy of the great efforts in favor of progress, on the part of the writers of the age—that of William IV., the Gulielmian age as it was called. These were, simply and innocently, called upon to do more than ever author did before, or will do hereafter; inaugurate by example a reform of unparalleled importance and transcendent magnitude, by merely writing English in a manner which they had not learned, and never heard of till the time of the "Address."

The treatise itself was, unfortunately, neither one thing nor the other. It was not wholly phonetic, nor yet wholly according to the old system. It was, rather, an expansion of some innovations exhibited in certain papers of the Cambridge "Classical Museum," proposed by one of the reputed editors, (possibly, sanctioned by the other,) which touched the *ed* of the past participle, and the *'s* of the

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possessive, or genitive, case. It spelt *plucked* as *pluckt*, and *father's*, etc., as *fathers*. There was no want of good reasoning in favor of the change, which was indeed so far from being a radical or revolutionary innovation that it was a restoration of the orthography of a better age; and, as such, wounded no one's conservatism. Nevertheless, it was, after a short trial, abandoned by its distinguished proposers. One part of the paper in support of it was the absolute annihilation of the doctrine that the 's of the genitive was the *his*, in combinations like "Christ his sake." It clenched the last nail in the coffin of this venerable grammatical error.

Now the interference on my own part with the received spelling was extended to—

1. *C* with the power of *s*. This was changed into *k*; giving us such combinations as *obskurest*, *kalkulate*, and the like.
2. The substitution of *kw* for *qu*—*kwestion*, *ekwalli*.
3. The same in respect to *gu*—*langwages*.
4. *I* final for *y*—*ekwalli*, *proporti*.
5. The substitution of the semivowel *y* for *i* in diphthongs; one of the leading principles of the work being that the number of vowels in a word should in no case exceed the number of syllables—*neynteenth*, *descreybing*, *leyk*, *wreyters*, *leyf*, etc.
6. The same principle substituted *w* for *u* in *about*, *amownt*, *pronounce*, etc.
7. For *p* was written *f*—*frases*, *filosofi*.
8. For *x*, *ks*—*ekspress*.
9. For *probable*, *middle*,—*probabl*, *middl*.

I am not now prepared to say that, if nine alterations were to be made, these were the best to begin with; yet I think that, as a group, they made a legitimate collection of samples.

My defence for thus investing my lucubrations with this parti-colored dress (or undress) was on the principle so well laid down in a short illustration of, I believe, Eastern origin:—"If you have a handful of truths, open it by one finger at a time." This was probably a mistake. For the introduction of the whole body of the wedge it was too little; for merely the thin edge, it was too much. Of course, the body of the pamphlet consisted mainly of the anticipation of objections, and the suggestion of the nature of the new signs required for the completion of the English Alphabet. From anything like the entire creation of a new letter I shrank, either from an acquired knowledge of its difficulty, or instinctively. Indeed, I had no inducements to aim at originality at all. For the *u* in *but* I proposed either the Greek *s* or an inverted *v* "Δ." For the *a* in *fate*, and the *o* in *note*, I suggested *æ* and *œ*; both of which I now condemn. For the *a* in *fat* "α," i.e. the diphthong *minus* the line which connects the extremity of its right-hand bend with the central column. This I abandon. So, also, I abandon *i* without the dot, ("i") for the *i* in *pit*; and so, also, *ü* (*u* with two dots) for

the *oo* in *food*. The only sign which I at present should care to defend is *u* for the *sh* in *shine*; and, even here, the aid of a committee of printers would be required to put it into form. I think now, as I thought then, that if we could only get the small letters, the capitals might be left to develop themselves; holding, however, most decidedly that the small must be equally as well fitted for writing as for printing.

But even in the case of the new letter I have suggested, I am prepared to take the facts of the present time as I find them. The Phonetic Alphabet of the *Phonetic Journal*, I accept as it stands; with a few exceptions, which I leave to the judgement of time.

The only new letter then which, under any circumstances, I should feel inclined to defend, I leave undefended. It was no creation of my own; but a sign taken from Rask's "Essay on the Sibilants," which I was then translating.

This Essay and the Greek Grammar belong to Metagraphy or Transliteration, rather than to Phonetic Spelling in the strict sense of the term. The former will be alluded to in the sequel.

Such were my early but forgotten productions,—still-born innocents. The writers of the Gulielmian age, of whom so much had been asked, did, of course, just nothing at all for them. Indeed, for my own part the little I know about them is as follows:—

One copy of the Essay on the Sibilants was certainly sold; for, some years afterwards, it appeared in a sale-list with the rest of the library of Mr Forskal of the British Museum.

Of the "Address" I heard that a copy was ordered by a circulating book-club in the country, and that "three weeks" were allowed to each member for the reading of it. It was republished by Mr Pitman, in his *Phonetic Journal* for July, 1859.

Thirdly, for the Greek Grammar in English letters, there was an actual wholesale order. It was given by a friendly bookseller at Eton who remembered me as a boy. I thought it was done for old acquaintance' sake, and was sorry to hear that the venture had been an unsuccessful one. But the sad truth came out at last. He had taken it for a comic Greek Grammar, and was both surprised and hurt when the few premature and precocious purchasers complained of it as an imposition. "They could not, for the life of them, see the fun in it." Nor, when stock was taken, did he.

I may perhaps be allowed to quote here the opening and concluding paragraphs of the "Address to the Authors of England and America," which attempted something—in a field that has since been diligently and profitably cultivated—and effected nothing.

Messieurs and Mesdames,

The obscurest individual amongst you, as well as the most celebrated, works equally, though in a different degree, towards the production of what may be called the literature of the age we live in. I think it highly probable, that in describing the modes of thought of the nineteenth century, some future historian may express himself in phrases like the following:—

"About this time, knowledge ceased to be the exclusive property of the learned

and the secluded. What Socrates did for philosophy, the writers of the Gulielmian age did for every kind of knowledge; they brought it down into common life, and men then began to form themselves into societies, not for the sake of pursuing, but of diffusing it; and works written professedly for the people came to be distributed at prices which a few years before would have appeared incredible. These productions of the press were meant for the information of the lower—they succeeded only in enlightening the middle classes. It never struck the promoters of such liberal schemes, that the chief embargos upon knowledge consisted not in the scarcity of books, or in the abstruseness of such of them as had been written with no especial view of being adapted to the most uninformed apprehension, but that the cause of the evil was more deeply rooted, namely, in the excessive difficulties which presented themselves in the first approaches towards knowledge, which arose from the complexity of the mode of spelling then in use, sufficient to give a distaste for every thing which books could teach, to all such beginners as were not gifted either with iron assiduity or instinctive genius. It never struck them, that although there was no royal road to knowledge, it was by no means incumbent on them to keep the usual one clogged up with unnecessary obstacles; and the amount of the distaste for studies such things tended to create, none seemed to have taken the trouble to calculate."

The following pages contain an attempt to obviate such remarks, and to render the very elements of mental improvement of as easy attainment as the nature of the things will allow, by the substitution of a complete for an incomplete orthography: and I address it to those in whose hands alone lies the power of introducing or rejecting alterations.

The author's proposals were then detailed at length, and the subject was urged upon the attention of the writers for the press by the following concluding remarks:—

A change from the present to a better state of things is not to be brought about suddenly, nor is it desirable that it should be so. Innovations must succeed each other slowly, but they would take place, and they would in the end succeed, if every man, in the least degree awakened to what ought to be done, would either himself introduce, if he be a writer, some alteration; or, if he be a reader, hesitate to condemn such authors as do so. A mighty change might be effected, with very little additional trouble given to the reading public, if even half those who appear in print would exert themselves to differ from the received orthography, even no more than Mitford does in his history of Greece, Hare and Thirlwall in their translation of Niebuhr, or Oliver in his critical grammar of the English language, or the author of the present work in the sheets now perused. Thus one might confine his innovations to the substitution of *z* for *s* in the plurals; another may write "A" for *oo* in such irregularly written words as *blood*, *flood*; and a third use the semivowel for the vowel in such diphthongs as *house*, *oil*. But the true adaptation of the letters of a nation to its language will begin with the introduction of one of the new signs *ð*, *þ*, etc. We must not, however, shut our eyes to the fact, that be such a change brought about as it may, the present and the next generation will have two alphabets to learn: this I think is the maximum of the inevitable evil which attends all innovations. To such as ask in what degree the present change is to be considered a final one, I can only answer that I see at present not the most distant prospect of the growth or introduction of anything like a new sound; but I will neither deny that the observations I have made on the use of the letters *r* and *z* involve some idea of a change in the pronunciation of the combinations those two letters form; nor that future innovators may arise and argue that it is abstractedly right that such letters as we have derived from other alphabets, should in our own keep that force, and that force only, which was given by the nation that invented them; nor that, for the sake of making our language of easy attainment to foreigners, and foreign

languages as little difficult as possible to ourselves, it may be practically advantageous that such sounds as the majority of European nations agree in attributing to certain letters we attribute to the same letters ourselves. In the first of these cases, *y*, as the descendant of *v*, a vowel sound, will be ejected from a language where the sound it was invented to represent is wanting; and in the second, a substitute will be procured for *j*, and *j* be sounded as *y* is at present, on the plea that the present power we give to *j* is unique and singular: and if the plea, that in printing diphthongs, the true elements must be given, *ay* or *ej*, *a^oy* or *a^oj*, and *aw*, will be substituted for *ey*, *oy*, and *ow*. Greater changes than these I can conceive no innovator who will venture to propose, or any alterations in our language which it will demand. But for fear lest I be considered to overvalue the evils of a thing so apparently unimportant as the fact of having twenty-four letters instead of thirty, or three modes of spelling a word instead of one, I must observe that the full weight of the embargo, both upon the attainment of information in respect to individuals, and the diffusion of it over masses of population arising therefrom, is all the less evident, because it is exactly in proportion as a man is possessed of literary acquirements or mental capabilities, that the difficulties he had to get over before he was enabled to read, and therefrom arising narrowness of his escape from a distaste to study, are less vividly impressed upon him. In his attempts to calculate such things, he can hardly be said to proceed upon any experience in regard to feelings he has forgotten; he must infer, as it were *à priori*, that such difficulties as he finds our alphabet to cause, would create so much discouragement in a child's mind, just as he would determine that all such practical knowledge as that *fire burns*, *ice chills*, etc., is the fruit of a series of unpleasant though forgotten experiments. Many early feelings must be re-embodied by my readers before they will be able to appreciate the arguments on which most of what has been written depends. As to the value of my own evidence on such subjects, I may truly say that I am possessed by no such blind enthusiasm as would shut my eyes to the difficulty of effecting such a change as the one proposed; still less am I conscious of having one iota of that feeling which too often prompts people to exhibit plans, not in order that the public may value them for the good they work, but for the specimen of acuteness they may display on the part of the projector. Moreover, the system I would introduce is far from being so exclusively my own as to generate any undue parental partiality. The investigations which led me to it lay among the works of writers the least likely to communicate their enthusiasm: whilst the admission that forming a system with reference to nothing but the standard of perfection, and adapting new improvements to an imperfect state of things previously existing, are things entirely different, I am less unwilling than unable to remedy imperfections arising from the nature of the alphabet I have to, as it were, engraft them upon, should prevent the giving to the thing proposed even a *primâ facie* appearance of its being a mere theory.

If I thought my attempt destined to share the fate of many such as have gone before it and been similar to it, and that it was doomed to be raked up from the pit of oblivion only in order to be held up as a warning to others of the futility of such like efforts as the present one, I should most certainly withhold it from the public, valuing, as I ought to do, their time and my own: but I am encouraged by finding, that of the many who have expressed a wish for alterations, few have in the smallest degree *adopted* any; and of those who have adopted any, few have detailed their reasons for doing so. The public, most naturally, place little reliance on a person who embodies his abuse of an alphabet in words spelt *literatim* in the mode he complains of, and still less on one who, if he does not leave too much to their penetration, seems to pay too little deference to their usages.

It is but equivocal advantage that the present attempt is in no wise a party cause, as, if it were so, men might be brought to think upon it, and their feelings might be enlisted on the side of their judgement; but so much is it the common

interest of every man who speaks English, that it is the business of everybody—which is nobody; and the idea of its being this is what ought especially to be guarded against. Great as the change from wrong to right is, it may be brought about without either the aid of academies or orthographical societies, if only a majority of those who read and of those who write would not so much convince themselves of the necessity of such a reform, but of the power each individual has to promote it; and the exertions necessary thereto consist in little more than the conquering of a prejudice, and the acting upon their conviction.

To transmit the birthright of civilisation which we derived from our ancestors unimpaired, and, if it may be so, improved to our posterity, is a social duty; and when the trouble each individual will have in clearing away the rubbish on the high road to knowledge is not greater than that of accustoming himself to write or read such a change as there is from *cat* to *kat*, at such intervals as may allow the innovations to accumulate until confirmed by custom, and the full necessary change have taken place—I say that that man is selfish who will not submit to it.

And be it remembered that the introduction of new letters touches with us no national prejudice, as it did with the Danes, with whom *a°* was objected to as a substitute for *aa*, on the ground of its being Swedish; nor is our present *a b c* entwined with any ideas of national glory and triumphs gone by, as is that of the Greeks. Our own alphabet, even in the best of times, was at best but a transfer from the Latin; the only original parts of it, *P* and *Q*, are rejected: the alterations it underwent in the Norman times are tokens not of our glory but our subjugation. The natural shortness of life is not more curtailed by waste of time on the part of ourselves, than the unattainableness of universal knowledge is aggravated by the multiplicity of its unnecessary obstacles. The division of labor is as important in literature as in manufactures; and if we of this age are bound to do for our posterity what our ancestors have done for ourselves; and if each era has its own peculiar modes of thought, and the universal culture of the intellect be so much a feature of the present one as to lead the many to confound it with superficialness, is that man who labors to exhibit in the most intelligible point of view that which is already discovered, serving mankind and earning their gratitude, one whit less than his fellow, who, with no greater genius, but more ambition, seeks to add to the stock of knowledge, leaving its diffusion to others? Both employments are undoubtedly of the highest nature, and neither must be raised at the expense of the other; but the one who, by rendering dark things light, and good things common, makes two intellectualists where before there was but one, adds to the number of laborers in the vineyard of knowledge; and by multiplying the quantum of thought in operation, finally, though indirectly, not only spreads wisdom more upon the earth, but also brings down more from heaven.

I confess I know no poetry equal to the contemplation of that intuitive and instinctive acquirement, and that unbounded substitution of intellectual for physical power, which must and will take place when there is not in any one branch of any one kind of wisdom any other let or hindrance than those which lie either in the nature of the subject itself, or in the insufficiency of the mind working thereon.

SECTION II.

THE VALUE OF THE PRESENT TIME FOR ACTION AND CO-OPERATION.

It has been indicated in the preceding section that a time has now come which differs from the days which went before it, in being exceptionably favorable. This is not a matter of degree, but of kind. The question of simple education has been long before us. The present, however, is a time of *compulsory* education. It is more

than this ; it is a time of *subsidised* education. More still, it is a time of *self*-subsidised, *self*-sustained, and *self*-supporting education : education which must be its own great reward ; and education to which every one who is benefited by it must contribute. This brings it within the domain of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Commissioners whose business it is to make the most of all existing educational endowments. Great powers are claimed for raising new, and utilising old funds ; the old endowments are to be diverted, and new rates to be laid, for the sake of the one great object of education in general.

The end justifies the means. But the means are (what, to the same extent, they have never been before) exceptional ; and the very fact of their being so must be taken as an element in the price paid for an inordinately superior advantage. Nevertheless, it creates a second party in the affair : and it does not follow that, because we get a great boon or profit, we are precluded from looking closely into the details of the bargain.

Here, except as an item which always commands attention, I put the money element out of the question. The incidence of the taxation falls on the more valuable article time : for time, so valuable to all, is of double value to the working man. If education, however, is made a matter which takes from him double, treble, four times, etc., the amount which is absolutely necessary, a wrong is inflicted upon him ; and this unnecessary waste may easily induce him to prefer the existing state of acquiescent ignorance to that of compulsory enlightenment. Perhaps he may be burning the candle at both ends ; or, be himself a ratepayer paying rates out of the money which his son, when dismissed from bird-tending, fails to earn. Such is his condition. The skilled artisan of the towns, himself, to a great degree, in the same predicament, may, perhaps, teach him a broader view of such matters ;—may, indeed, persuade him that all is for the best. Let us assume that he does so. There is still a point on which both can agree ; namely, that whatever be given in return for the immediate loss should be given in return for as slight a sacrifice as possible.

Here I pause. The moment it is shown that the art of reading and writing can be obtained at the price of so many shillings or so many days less than the amount which the constrained education of his son charges, he has a matter which touches him most closely. The particular case may be phonetic spelling, or it may be anything else. At any rate, it is a matter for a large class to look to, and, as the day has now come when this class can not only judge for themselves, but have a voice in the decision, I submit that I am justified in speaking of the present time as one which we have not seen before, and one which we should not allow to pass by.

SECTION III.

THE "*FONETIK NYZ*," AND THE "PLEA FOR PHONETIC SPELLING."

The publication of the *Fonetik Nyz* was the first practical appeal to the public. It let them know what a radical reform really was. It told them that our alphabet was completed, and showed them what the completion led to. It was, in short, an accomplished fact. It attracted attention; and the question was permanently set afloat. It was canvassed, upon the whole, fairly. The objections fell under two heads.

Everyone thought there was some particular letter which might be improved; and when twenty different persons picked out twenty different letters, the whole alphabet was broken up in detail. It was like the Mahometans who eat the whole hog; each by abstaining from some particular part while they made free of the remainder. Still more like was it to the immortal coat in the Tale of the Tub; where each brother preserved what the others relinquished, and relinquished what the others chose. It was soon found out, however, that letters were not easy things to extemporise: and that the alphabet, if taken at all, must be taken as it was found. Upon this principle the present treatise is written. We have got our tool, and no good workman will complain of it until he has been lucky enough to supply himself with a better.

Other objections lay against the principle. Upon this Mr Ellis's "Plea" may speak for itself. (§ 31). He gives them all in detail. There is (1) the *Etymological Objection*; (2) the *Homonymical Objection*; (3) the *Pecuniary Objection*; (4) the *Linguistic Objection*; (5) the *Conservative Objection*; (6) the *Pronunciative Objection*; (7) the *Double Trouble Objection*; (8) the *Strange Appearance Objection*; (9) the *Vocalistic Objection*; (10) the *Book Dearth Objection*; (11) the *Typical Objection*; (12) the *Phonetical Objection*; (13) the *Inutility Objection*; and (14) the *Partial Success Objection*.

At the present time every one of these objections is abated; and I may add that, when the "Plea" was written, every one of them was anticipated.

Of the theoretical ones, the *Etymological* is the only one which is at all formidable; and it is this more on account of the intellectual culture and influence of the class of writers who maintain it, than from its own intrinsic validity.

The practical ones have answered themselves. The *strange-appearance objection* is so much a matter of taste as to be unfit for argument: though it is well to recognise its existence. The *conservative* and *inutility objections* are mere negations. The *double-trouble objection* must be dealt with according to the teachings of experience; for it turns upon the question as to what we pay as a price and what we gain as a benefit. Upon the answer to this every

advocate of Phonetic Spelling has, of course, made up his mind. On the other hand, he must, if he desire to make proselytes, convince others. The *book-dearth*, *typical*, and the *partial-success* objections no longer exist; not, at least, in the way they existed when the "Plea" was written. There is now no *book-dearth* at all; and there is a great deal more than a *partial success*.

The *Homonymical objection* lies midway between the two divisions. It applies to words like *wright*, *write*, *rite*, and *right*; and to others besides. If they were all written alike, how could we distinguish them? But how do we distinguish them when they are used in conversation, and address themselves to the *ear* only, without fear; that is, when they are all *spoken* alike. Easily enough. The context is a sufficient guide. But suppose that it be not so? We may reply to this question that "when a case of real ambiguity occurs, it will be time to think of the remedy." If this be ignored as a mere haphazard answer, another, of a more general character, may be substituted for it. It is the function of writing to *represent* language, not to improve it: just as it is the business of a portrait-painter to take the features of his sitter as they are presented to him by the proprietor as he sits. He must take each with his own proper character for the time being; wholly irrespective of any differentiation between him and his *alias*. If the principals or their friends do not know which is which, it is their business. They will probably, if a distinction be really needed, find means of discriminating between them. I do not, however, say that in some very poor languages, and in some exceptional instances, some diacritical mark may not, on rare occasions, be needed. I have heard of such things in China. I have read of such things in the language of the Arrapahos of North America; but I have tried to find an instance of it in English, and failed; though, of course, if a person taxed his ingenuity to invent one, he would probably succeed.

Thus far the question is a point of practice; and I by no means deny the possibility of its being, in some extraordinary instances, a practical one.

In theory, or from the scientific view, the matter stands on a different ground. *Rite*, *right*, *write*, and *wright* are words originally different; and this original difference may be a fact, not only worth preserving, but going out of our way to preserve: for it is a detail in the history of four words—interesting to say the least of it; possibly instructive. Be it so. But the *fusion* of the four into one, is just as historical, just as interesting, just as instructive. And this the present spelling entirely conceals. One piece of history, in short, is exhibited at the expense of the other. It is doubtful, however, whether any good reason for the preference can be given. Surely, then, instead of raising a discussion upon the doubtful point as to which of two facts should be sacrificed to the preservation of the other, it is better to keep aloof from the question altogether; and this we may do by the simple principle of limiting the spelling

to its proper and exclusive function—the representation of the sounds of which it consists.

Upon the *Pronunciative objection* something will be said in the sequel, when the merits and demerits of the French orthography come under notice.

In one point and in one point only, Mr Ellis's classification seems imperfect. Perhaps he meant it to belong to the *double-trouble objection*; but according to his narrative there was no trouble at all. Miss Mitford told him that at two years old she read the newspaper, showing off her ability in doing so. No one was likelier to have done such a thing if it could be done at all. Mr Ellis, however, may have been too polite a man to say this. He might, however, have said that if she read the paper of the day in the twenty-fourth month of her infancy she would have read the *Fœnetik Nyz* in the twelfth. All that this anecdote proves is that Miss Mitford was not as other children are. Upon the ease with which our ordinary spelling may be learned by ordinary readers it is no evidence whatever.

The time for enumerating and exposing the numberless redundancies, defects, and inconsistencies of our alphabet has, probably, gone by. Denunciation and ridicule may, possibly, have done their duty; for there is a time for all things, and, except on the platform, there is now but little inducement for a reformer to be either funny or indignant. Hard names and strong epithets have, doubtless, done good service in their time, and may, perhaps, do it again. At present, however, there is no one in particular to be blamed, for it is no one's fault that our alphabet is as bad as it has been proved to be. Nor is it the fault of the alphabet and the orthography themselves, though it is their misfortune. The vices of our system have either grown with its growth, or have been forced upon it; and, in the opinion of the present writer, the best way of convincing the public of their existence is to trace them to their origin, and note the stages of their development. By doing this we account for them; perhaps we may be said to excuse them. But what argument is so decisive as to the existence of an evil as the exhibition of the circumstances under which it attained its dimensions, and the evidence of its being neither more nor less than the natural result of the conditions by which it was preceded? Or what is more condemnatory than the excuse which coincides with, and even anticipates, the accusation? Whatever may be the case in other respects, it is certain that, when we take the subject from this point of view, we put ourselves in the place of our opponents, and, in doing this, are in the best position for a clear understanding of the matter under discussion.

SECTION IV.

THE ENGLISH SYSTEM OF SPELLING AT LEAST TWELVE HUNDRED YEARS OLD—OF LATIN ORIGIN.

The single point upon which all who have taken the pains to form an opinion agree, is the bad pre-eminence of the English language in respect to its spelling. Upon this the most conservative defenders of the existing system and the most advanced innovators are of one mind. In the eyes, perhaps, of the most partial of the former, the French orthography may be backed against our own for badness. The respective demerits, however, are scarcely commensurable. However artificial may be the system of expedients by which the French attempt to combine Etymology and Phonesis, the application of it is comparatively regular, consistent, and systematic. That the system is long in learning is beyond doubt. Nevertheless, when once mastered it can be used. It is not pretended that this is the case with English. At any rate we have this remarkable fact before us, namely, that of these two among the leading languages of civilised Europe being the two in which the representation of a fine form of speech, and a valuable literature, is the most imperfect. We may deplore this, or we may be unwilling to say too much about it. We may look about for a remedy, or we may give up the case as hopeless. Sometimes we may take the pains to expose the more egregious defects of the alphabet of Shakspeare and Bacon; and sometimes we may find a grim, malicious pleasure in ridiculing them. Out of all this good of some kind may come; for the public at large may be thus informed of the extent of the evil, and the essential conditions of a reform may be thus established.

It is better, however, (though the attempt may be mistaken for a defence,) to inquire into the causes of such a result. What makes the French orthography so much worse than the Italian or the Spanish? What makes the English so faulty, as compared with the German or the Danish?

One answer to this presents itself at once. The English alphabet, with its corresponding orthography, is, if not the oldest, one of the oldest of the class to which it belongs—the class being that of those languages whose alphabet is derived from the Latin; namely, those of Germany, Holland, Scandinavia, England, and America; of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland; of France, Portugal, Spain, and Italy; of Poland, Bohemia, and Dalmatia; of Lithuania and of Finland;—in other words, the languages of Western Europe in general; as opposed to the Servian and the Russian, of Greek origin. This division, which nearly coincides with that of the Roman Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity on the one side, and the Greek Church and Mahometanism on the other, is thoroughly natural. And, as the division is natural, so is the distinction between a Latin and a Greek framework important.

Though this comparatively high antiquity of the English alphabet

is a matter which scarcely requires proof, it is one which is very likely to be overlooked. Compared with the alphabets of Greece and Rome, *all* the alphabets of modern Europe are of recent origin. The English, however, is older than most of them. It had, probably, taken form, and been applied to spelling, as early as the first quarter of the seventh century, if not earlier. The general rule in the history of the introduction of an alphabet into the languages of modern Europe is that it coincides with the introduction of Christianity; so that where the Gospel enters, civilization and literature follow. Now this means something more than the mere art of spelling. It means the cultivation of the language to which the alphabet is applied; and as this may take place under very different circumstances, it is very uncertain in its extent. In the great countries of France, Italy, and the Spanish Peninsula, where not only the alphabet but the language was Latin, the practice of *writing* the native tongue came late: for, though the use and the value of the alphabet were known, the only language that was written by means of it was the *Latin*. Such being the case, we can scarcely compare the alphabets and orthographies of France, Spain, and Italy, in point of antiquity, with our own. The alphabets themselves were, doubtless, as old as the Roman conquests of the different countries. The application, however, of them to the vernaculars of the land was, in all cases, comparatively late.

The first specimen of the language of Gaul, or France, dates from A.D. 842. It is the oath taken by Charles the Bald, the son of Charlemagne, by which his quarrel with his brother Ludwig was checked. It is a hundred years later than a very well spelt fragment of an Anglo-Saxon specimen quoted by Beda. It is Provençal rather than French. Still, it stands alone, nearly two centuries earlier than any succeeding piece of either French or Provençal of equal length. It is fairly spelt; the spelling, however, is not French in the ordinary sense of the term. Except, however, in the combination *dh* in *ajudha* and *cadhuna*, it is Latin orthography applied to a Latinising language.

Pro Deo amur et pro Xristian poblo et nostro commun salvament d'ist di en avant, in quant Deus savir et poder me dunat, si salvarai eo cist meon fradre Karlo, et in ajudha et in cadhuna cosa, si com om per dreit son fradre salvar dist, in o quid il me altresi fazet: et ab Ludher nul plaيد nunquam prindrai uni, meon vol, cist meon fradre Karle in damno sit."

In Britain and in Germany the case was different; for in Britain and Germany the languages were not of the Latin, but of the Celtic, and Teutonic families. In Britain, then, and in Germany the Latin alphabet was applied to the native languages earlier than elsewhere. The Polish, Bohemian, Lithuanian, Fin, and the other less important alphabets of Latin origin are of much later introduction; the conversion of the countries to which they applied being later than that of either Germany or the British Isles.

Our A.B.C, then, has been in work for upwards of twelve hun-

dred years; though this as compared with the age of the Latin and Greek alphabets is a short period, it is a long one compared with many others. But this, though manifestly true as a matter of fact, is of too general a nature to be explanatory: and a more specific reason is required. We shall find this, to great extent, in the difference already alluded to between the Greek and Latin alphabets as models, or frameworks, for the several secondary alphabets derived from them. The Greek was decidedly more phonetic than the Latin. Where the Latin made no distinction between the long and short *A* and *O*, the Greeks had their *Epsilon* and *Eta* (ϵ and η) along with their *Omikron* and *Omega* (\omicron and ω). Where the Latin spelt the sound of *th* with two letters, or by means of an artificial combination, the Greek wrote θ or Θ (theta). Thirdly, the Greeks used the letter κ (kappa) wherever it was wanted: the Latins eschewed it, and used *C* instead. What this eschewal has led to we shall see in the sequel.

Though the Latin was the worst of the two models, there were degrees in its inferiority; or, to speak more correctly, there were some countries in which there was a Greek influence as well, and, by means of this, either improvements in the adaptation of the Latin letters were effected, or certain faults were avoided. In continental Germany, for instance, the *k* not only got admitted into the alphabet, but kept, and continues to keep, its ground. The first German alphabet, however, was of *Greek* origin. In Britain the influences were more exclusively Latin, and the *k*, though admitted, so to say, upon sufferance, was long treated as a stranger. At the present time, indeed, it is recognised; but whoever turns to a dictionary and counts the words which begin with it, will find that they are far fewer to the eye than to the ear, the reason being that more than half of them are found under *C*. At first, however, *k* was kept out of our alphabet altogether: simply because it was avoided by the Romans. But even in the Latin spelling it presents itself exceptionally. In fact, though a letter which, in all the alphabets of Latin origin, lies under disadvantages, it is one which, sooner or later, shows itself. At present, however, it is sufficient to connect its absence in a system of spelling with the Latin origin of the alphabet.

SECTION V.

THE ALPHABETS AND SYSTEMS OF SPELLING WITH WHICH THE ENGLISH MUST BE COMPARED.

The English alphabet, then, is an old one, and, more than this, an old one which from the beginning was formed upon an indifferent model. This was the Latin; but in the Latin, as a model or a framework, there were degrees. There was the Latin pure and simple, with no second influence to disturb it; and there was the Latin in certain quarters where Greek influences might, possibly,

be at work by its side. From the Latin in its more exclusive form the English art of writing was, probably, derived. This brings us to closer inquiry as to the details of its origin; for all that has hitherto been said about it has been of a very general nature. The Latin origin has been indicated; this, however, was done chiefly with the view of contrasting it with a Greek one. The question whether it was got directly from the Latin, or through some secondary language, still stands over; and though twenty years ago the inquiry would scarcely suggest itself, it is, at the present time, an important one.

Again; the beginning of the seventh century was only given as an approximation. All it meant was this,—that the English language was one of the older ones of Europe. How it stood in this respect with certain languages was only indicated. The antiquity of the alphabets of the languages of the German (Teutonic) and Keltic families, as compared with those of the languages derived from the Latin, and those of the Slavonic and Lithuanic families, was put prominently forwards; or changing the expression, the application of the Roman alphabet to the Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and French languages was shown to be recent. These, then, were eliminated from the field of comparison, which was thus narrowed to two families.

Of these (1) the Keltic gives us *two* alphabets, orthographies, or systems of spelling, both derived not only from the Latin, but from the Latin in its more exclusive form. They were both, of course, applied to languages other than Latin,—the British (Welsh) and the Irish (Gaelic). They were both connected with the same form of Christianity, that of the British Church. They were both, as far as we can judge, originally formed on the same principles, though afterwards they diverged, and are now to be contrasted, rather than compared with one another. We must take a very extreme view of the unimportance of the Early British Church, unless we assign to the Irish and Welsh orthographies a very early date. In any case, they are as old as the English; and probably, older. It will scarcely, however, be maintained that either of them has been subjected to the same amount of modifying or disturbing influences. Add to this that one of them, the Welsh, has been remodeled; so that, although at the present time the Welsh orthography is, in some respects, one of the best in Europe, it is not one which can be said to have either a long and active, or a sustained and continuous history.

2. *Three* alphabets may be assigned to the Teutonic or German class of languages, (a) our own, the English; (b) the German of Germany; (c) the Mæso-gothic. Of these it may safely be said that the third in the order here given is the oldest. But the whole literature of the Mæso-gothic consists in the remains of a translation of the Gospels, along with fragments of a fuller version of (probably) the whole Bible, and a few short records of certain sales or bargains

under the reign of the Gothic kings in Italy. The whole era, however, of the Mæso-gothic alphabet lies between A.D. 370 and A.D. 700—this being an over-liberal estimate. Any comparison, then, of the Mæso-gothic, notwithstanding its antiquity, as a practical working alphabet, with the English is out of the question and, as much will be said of it hereafter in connection with other parts of our subject, this is enough for the present.

In respect, then, of anything like equal antiquity, combined with an equally continuous history, it is only the German alphabet and orthography that can be compared with our own: and it is probable that if we knew the dates of the first-written specimens of either the German of the Continent, or the German of Britain, (that is, the Anglo-Saxon,) we should find but little difference between them. Each has been subjected to the influences of not less than thirteen centuries. In their relative exposure, however, to influences from without, there is no such agreement. There is no such fact in the history of the German language as that of the Norman conquest in England, by which a second language was introduced, a concurrent literature encouraged, and the cultivation of the native language, for more than two centuries, kept in abeyance. As for the mass of foreign words thus introduced, there is no approach to equality: for let us say what we may about the Gothic, the Teutonic, or the German structure of our tongue, it is as decidedly a mixed language as the German is a homogeneous one. Lastly, in respect to their grammatical structure, the English is in a different stage from the German. Notwithstanding, however, all this, the German orthography, though open to much improvement, is one of more than average goodness, while the English is, to say the least, more bad than indifferent.

SECTION VI.

THE PRONUNCIATIVE OBJECTION. THE DEFECTS OF FRENCH ORTHOGRAPHY.

The French, the second worst language in the world for its system of spelling, though far behind our own for badness, owes its faults to a different cause. It was not, like the English, a language belonging to a different family from that of its alphabet; though, like the English, it was founded exclusively on a Latin basis. Two other causes favored its badness.

1. The French of Paris was not the dialect to which it was originally applied: for the Provençal of the South and South-East was cultivated before the French of the North: in fact the Provençal and the French were, and are, two different languages.

2. The language, when first written, was in such a transitional state that it retained at the time when the alphabet was first applied to it, an inordinate number of forms which afterwards became ob-

solete. Yet who could say at what time the change had gone so far that the spelling ought to be accommodated to it? No one. So the language changed while the spelling remained as it was.

Now this brings us to the *Pronunciative objection*. There is a difficulty in selecting the right pronunciation out of several conflicting ones. This, however, is the business of the speaker and not that of the speller: it is a point not of orthography but of orthoepy. All that spelling has to do is to represent such or such a sound, or combination of sounds. Whether it be the right one is to be settled by time. The *Pronunciative objection*, as Mr Ellis truly remarks, is a fault of the language, which it is not the function of the Phonetic speller to amend. Herein it agrees with the *Homonymical*.

And the two agree in this. They are not to be condemned on a mere inspection. Each inculcates the necessity of judgement and circumspection. It is possible that, in some exceptional cases, homonyms may create a deficiency which the context may not remove. And it is also possible, (indeed very probable) that real difficulties may arise which invest with a certain amount of validity the objection under notice. That it is desirable that spelling should have something to do with giving stability to a language few deny. But where and when is the fixation to begin? We are not, on the one side, to stereotype a language until the end of time; nor are we, on the other, to stamp the fictitious sanction of an *Imprimatur* on a word of which the form may be ephemeral or evanescent. These, and a few others, are the points wherein it well becomes us to consider the objections closely, seriously, with a sense of responsibility, and with the free admission of their legitimacy within a proper limit. The questions of *Homonymy*, of *Pronunciation*, and of the extent to which a phonetic orthography may be used for the secondary and subordinate purpose, (for such it undoubtedly is) of what is called the *fixation of a language* are, pre-eminently, those where the innovator must take certain objections from the objector's point of view. He must do so, to some extent, in the matter of etymology; but here he must do so most especially—perhaps, also, in the spirit of compromise.

SECTION VII.

THE REPRESENTATION OF LANGUAGE NEVER KEEPS PACE WITH THE CHANGES OF LANGUAGE ITSELF. THE BADNESS OF THE FRENCH SYSTEM OF SPELLING.

It is well to illustrate the leading causes of the badness of an orthography by giving prominence to the systems of spelling which are most decidedly affected by them. The English is bad, so is the French. Each, however, owes its badness to a different cause.

To a reader who is, at one and the same time, a good Latin scholar and a confirmed upholder of the etymological principle, the

French spelling may, possibly, be rather laudable than the contrary. It preserves the old forms, even though the modern language has rejected them. Thus, though it fails to represent the language as it is, it succeeds to admiration in telling us what it has been; and this in the eyes of an etymologist passes for a merit. Upon this, however, it is enough to say that the etymological objection against phonetic spelling is of more value in France than in England. It is certain also that though phonetic spelling is perhaps less required in France than in England, it would, if applied, disguise the language more;—as far, of course, as the eye, accustomed to the usual orthography, is concerned. This is because, in France, there are two languages,—one for the ear, the other for the eye. But as the two are simply the same form of speech in different stages, there is (great as the contrast between them may be,) a principle, or the shadow of a principle, to give regularity to the system of their difference. The written French is Old French, even as Anglo-Saxon is Old English. In England, however, we have no such consolation, defence, or semblance of a system. In France, if twenty different words are found to differ from each other according as they are spoken or written, or as they are read or heard, there is a class to which each may be referred, and for each of such classes there is a rule. In England there is no rule at all. In this lies the great difference between the two languages in the valuation of their demerits. Yet the English and the French are among the leading languages of the world; second, to say the least of them, to none. But they are, *facile primi*, the first two in bad spelling. The French has been the least disturbed. It has also the advantage of its alphabet and its language belonging to the same family,—the Latin. But this is the main reason for its defects. It has kept up that kind of continuity with the mother-tongue which made the retention of old forms of spelling, long after the language itself had ignored them, so much of a habit as to end in its being a necessity.

This, then, shows what happens when changes of language are not accompanied by corresponding changes in the representation of it; and, as this is one of the main causes of bad systems of spelling, the French language has been chosen as an illustration. At present this is the sole reason for our reference to it, though, when we come to details, it will be again referred to.

SECTION VIII.

THE ETYMOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE.

Much more will be said about this hereafter, because, (as has already been mentioned,) it is one of the great practical points in the phonetic question; not so much on account of its own merits as because it enlists in its defence at least three-fourths of the scholarship of the kingdom. It is here merely foreshadowed in its

generalities, and that because this is its proper place. It is closely connected with what has just preceded it, because the extent to which speech changes rapidly, while the representation of it changes slowly, was well—pre-eminently well—illustrated in the French language. The *old* forms which are still preserved with an appearance of life and reality in the *present* spelling—dead as they are—are preserved on etymological or historic grounds.

In the present section, however, the principle is dealt with in its more general form; for it may exist independently of any change in language whatsoever. It may exist in the most original orthography in the world. It may present itself in a language hitherto unknown; or, when known, absolutely isolated. If so, the accommodation of the spelling to obsolete forms is out of the question. So is it, also, in respect to words derived from other languages; for, in the supposed instance, there is no language with which it can be compared. To illustrate this, and at the same time to show that the case is not an imaginary one, let us suppose that the languages of (say) Tierra del Fuego and of the Andaman Islands are reduced to an alphabet, into which the Scriptures, or some part of them, have been translated. A word which begins with the sound of *s* will have an *s* as its first letter. It will, in no case, begin with a *c*. Why? The ordinary system of representing a single sound by a single letter will take its course, inasmuch as there is nothing to contravene it. In English, however, *sity* might be (as it is) spelt *city*, and we know the reason why. It is derived, indirectly, from the Latin *civitas*. But with the languages here mentioned there is no such thing as a derivation of this kind. Every true native word is spelt as it is sounded.

Nevertheless, there may be, even in languages of this kind, ample room for the introduction of the etymological principle; indeed, it may have existed in the very first language ever reduced to an alphabet.

This, of course, leads to a distinction. Connections in the way of etymology fall under two heads.

1. There are derivations of which the several elements are contained in *different* languages. Such is the connection between *city* and *civitas*.

2. There are others in which they are contained within the *same* language. Such is the connection between *wife* and *wives*.

The former is impossible in languages either actually isolated, or, if derived, of unknown origin.

The latter may exist in the most isolated language existing.

Of each of those kinds we have ample illustrations in our own language. Of the first we find any amount of instances under the simple letter *c*. Why is this letter used when *s* would do as well? Take the word already used as a specimen. *Civis* is the Latin for a *citizen*, *civitas* for a *city*. No matter how the *c* was originally sounded. It was, no doubt, at some time or other, pronounced as

k. But this time went by, no one exactly knows when. After the change into *s*, it passed into the French language. From the French the English took it, but they took it with the French sound or power. And as they found it written, so they themselves wrote it. How or why it was changed is a question which, at present, is unimportant. The simple fact of its changes, and the adoption of the spelling which it gave rise to, are all that is at present under notice. It explains what is meant by the etymological principle as applied to words *not* belonging to the language in which the etymological spelling is found.

We may follow the principle further. The number of words wherein *c*, followed by *e*, *i*, or *y*, is sounded as *s*, may be so great, that the practice of thus sounding it may become universal. Hence it is extended to words where it is followed by *a*, *o*, or *u*. This ended in *k* being practically excluded from the Latin language. Hence, again, as our alphabet was of Latin origin, and as *k* was never formally admitted as a Latin letter, we have come to spell the thoroughly English words *can* and *could* with a *c*, though in German and Scandinavian (or Norse) they begin with *k*. But *ken* (*know*) is the same word as *can*, in a different tense—this and nothing more. *Ken*, however, if spelt with *c*, would run the risk of being sounded as *sen*; and this it is which has brought in the irrepressible *k*, the result being that *ken* is the English spelling of one tense of the verb *can*, and *can* the English spelling of another tense of the verb *ken*; for *can*, though it now means ability, originally meant power or ability *obtained by knowledge*. *Ken* = I know = *can* = I have known, that is, I know, or am able, at the present time.

The words *ken* and *can*, then, show two things; and for this reason they have been brought forward. The etymological principle brought in the *c* instead of *k*, and *can* was spelt as we have just spelt it. But *ken* could not have been so spelt, and *k* was resorted to. Nothing proves better the imperfection and the inconsistency of this so-called principle. It is resorted to in the case of *city* and *civitas* to show the connection between the two words; in *can* and *ken* it conceals it.

An additional illustration of this principle is seen in *cat* and *kitten*.

3. The etymological principle as it is suggested by forms found within the limits of one and the same language, of which the words *wife* and *wives* have been given as an example, is most conspicuous in two large classes of words, alike in form, though different in respect to their places in grammar. These are the genitive (or the possessive) cases and the plural numbers of substantives, both of which end, so far as the eye is concerned, in *s*; the possessive cases in *'s* (or *s* with an apostrophe), the plurals in *s* pure and simple,—*father*, of a *father*, the *father's* son, the *fathers* of the families. For the genitive plural the sign is *s'*, that is, it is the genitive (or

possessive) singular, with the place of the apostrophe transposed, e.g. *the ship's sail*, *the ships' sails*, according as one or more than one is spoken of. All this has found its way into the ordinary grammars, and is known to even the readers of Lindley Murray. The history, however, of the apostrophe, and the double sound of the final *s*, has not, until lately, had due attention bestowed upon it; neither is it so prominently exhibited in even the better class of teaching books as it ought to be.

It is simple enough. The possessive case in Anglo-Saxon ended in the syllable "*es*," the plural in the syllable "*as*"—as, *wulf*, *wulf-es*, *wulf-as*; *brid*, *bridd-es*, *bridd-as* = *wulf*, *wulf's*, *wulfs*; *bird*, *bird's*, *birds*; where there is only the addition of a letter, and no extra syllable at all. As for the old genitive (possessive) plural it was *wulf-a* and *bridd-a*, so that the English form in *s* is merely an extension of the *s* of the singular.

Now as long as the *s* was preceded by a vowel and belonged to a different syllable from that of the main body of the word, the speaker was free to pronounce it in a uniform manner. It might always be sounded as the *s* in *sin* or the *ss* in *ass*. As soon, however, as the vowel was dropped and the two consonants came into contact, the action and reaction between them created a second sound. When the consonant which preceded it was *p*, *f*, *t*, *th* (as pronounced in *thin*.) or *k*, the original sound was retained, and words like *taps*, *chaffs*, *gnats*, *laths*, and *backs* were spelt as they were sounded. When, however, the preceding consonant was *b*, *v*, *th* (as in *thine*.) or *g*, the sound was that of *z*; and the spelling by which it was represented would give, as the plurals of words like *stab*, *slave*, *lad*, *lathe*, and *nag*, *stabz*, *slāvz*, *ladz*, *lāthz*, and *nagz*: the change being the necessary result of the contact of two consonants of different degrees of what is called hardness and softness, a change which is by no means a matter of choice on the part of the speaker. The two consonants must be in the same class, one of them being accommodated to the other. In the words before us, the latter is accommodated to the former, and *stag* gives *stagz*. The converse, however, might have been the case, and the former have been accommodated to the latter: in which case the plural of *stag* would have been *staks*. *Z*, however, seems to have been a favored sound. The plurals and genitives of words ending in vowels and liquids (where the pronunciation is optional) are all, to the ear, formed by the addition of *z*: for, whatever may be the spelling, *hamz*, *henz*, *hillz*, *barz*, *blowz*, *fiez*, etc., are the sounds we utter in pronunciation.

This is the etymological principle as applicable, or applied, to words within the pale of the same language. The English forms in *-s* well illustrate it, for they fall into two classes, the genitive (or possessive) cases originating in *-es*, and the plurals originating in *-as*. The past tenses and participles, according as they end in *t* or *d*, belong to the same system; and along with these a few other words, which, as they form smaller classes, are of less importance.

SECTION IX.

ORIGINAL INSUFFICIENCY OF LETTERS—ORTHOGRAPHIC
EXPEDIENTS.

The insufficiency of letters, or the want of proportion between the number of simple single sounds for which signs are required, and the actual number of such as are found in alphabets, is one of the commonest causes of bad, or indifferent, spelling. It is the fault, or misfortune, of most languages; perhaps of all: for, though in many alphabets of comparatively recent origin the evil is reduced to a *minimum*, it can scarcely be said to be absolutely abolished: indeed, when such is the case, and when to a sufficient system of letters the merits of uniformity in their application is superadded, we have, as far as the mere analysis and representation go, a full and perfect phonetic alphabet. Even then, however, the signs or letters may be faulty. They may, for instance, be too clumsy to be written with ease, too slightly distinguished from one another to be easily read, and thirdly, so unlike each other in the general character of their structure as to present to the eye of the reader a strange and inharmonious whole when printed or written in pages. Saving however, this, and a few other minor objections, it is clear that, when we have got an alphabet which is, at one and the same time, complete in the number of its letters, and uniform in the application of them, we have nearly all that is wanted. As this, however, has never yet been found in any language wherein the orthography has been left wholly to itself, it follows that merits of the kind under notice are, pre-eminently, the characteristics of the more modern alphabets; indeed, it is only in those that have been specially, purposely, and, at the same time skilfully reformed, that they are found at all. We have the same result, of course, when, for some language hitherto unwritten, a competent constructor has succeeded in reducing it to writing. This, however, is the making, rather than the growth or development, of an alphabet.

As a fair proportion between the sounds and the signs by which they are expressed, is the prerogative of the more recent alphabets, so is the contrary the great demerit of the older ones: though the rule is by no means universal. There are old alphabets with an adequate number of sounds, and there are new ones where the want of them is miserably and mischievously great. Upon the whole, however, the difference is real. Moreover it is natural. In respect to the first alphabet,—a wonder of an invention,—it is a great thing that it existed at all. We expect that it will be incomplete. We shall soon see that it was so. Unfortunately, however, we shall also see that the deficiencies of the infancy of orthography were most insufficiently rectified as alphabets grew older; and that, when the more important alphabets of the world had attained their majority they were in a very unhealthy condition.

The natural result of this system of insufficiency is the creation of a whole series of makeshifts, or, as they are called by philologues, orthographical expedients. A few instances of this kind are enough to show how they work. A letter is wanting. This means that one sign has to do the work of two. Nothing illustrates this better than certain details in the history (and it forms a history by itself) of the letter *c*. In the French language it reigns predominant. It excludes *k* altogether. There was no *k* in Latin, and, as the French keeps up its classical traditions, there is none in the language of France. To a great extent, the rule that *c* before *e*, *i*, or *y* is pronounced as *s* is sufficiently regular and general to help the learner; though why there should be such a rule at all is not very clear. In like manner, the rule, that *c* before *a*, *o*, or *u* is sounded as *k*, is valid up to a certain point; for the sound of *s* before a broad vowel (*a*, *o*, *u*) in a word, which, etymologically, ought to be spelt with *c*, is rare. Still it occurs. To shew, then, that *c* is not *c* but *s*, we make a mark like a comma under it; which really means that we make a new letter; though not one recognised in the alphabet and in the arrangement of dictionaries. It is not *c*; which, in such cases, is *k*. It is not *s*; because it is, as a letter, a mere modification of *c*. What then is it? It is *c* in a non-natural sense; a makeshift; an orthographical expedient.

On the other hand, the rule that *c* before a small vowel is *s* is valid up to a certain point: for the sound of *k*, which, before a small vowel (*e*, *i*, or *y*) ought to be spelt *ke* etc., is comparatively rare. Still it occurs. But the French cannot write it. In Italian we might write it *chi*: but in French the combination *ch* is used with another power—used-up, so to say. It stands for the English *sh*; as in *charade*, *chaise*, etc. We have, then, no resource in the *h*. So the spelling is done by means of *q+u*; which gives us *que*, *qui*, *quillet*, etc. In Spanish, otherwise a well-spelt language, we have the same difficulty. How can a Spaniard express the sound of *k* before *i*? Not by *c*; for that has a different sound. Not by *ch*, for that, as in French, is used with another power. What, then, can the Spaniard do? He must even do as the Frenchman does—have recourse to *q+u*, and a very indifferent one it is.

Now the word *chimæra* is, at once, English, French, Spanish, Latin, and Greek. In the last named language it is spelt *χιμαίρα*, in Latin *chimæra*, in English *chimæra*, in all of which languages the *ch* is pronounced as *k*. In French it is *chimere*; where the *ch*=*sh*. But in Spanish it is pronounced as in Greek, etc., and retains either its true sound, or a near approximation to it. Yet in Spanish it is spelt *quimera*: of all impossible spellings for a Greek, the most impossible.

Such is one out of many of the long list of orthographical expedients. How little the system favors a true etymological representation is easily seen. Yet it is out of a supposed adherence to etymology than it grew. The preference of *c* to *k* is etymological or nothing.

It will be shown in the sequel that, *mutatis mutandis*, the series of insufficient makeshifts which has been illustrated by a reference to *c* repeats itself with *g*; where in words like *rogue* the *u* is needed in order to show that the *o* is long. Write it *rog*, and the vowel runs the risk of being sounded short (*rôg*). Write it *roag* and you disguise its Latin origin, from *rogo*. Write it *roge*, and the *g* may be sounded as *j*, or as the *ge* in *George*.

This is sufficient to show what is meant by an orthographical expedient, and how it is connected with the insufficiency of signs; or, in other words, with the incompleteness of the alphabet.

SECTION X.

WRONG CLASSIFICATION—DISTURBANCE AND CONFUSION, ETC.

To one of the three preceding heads more than three-fourths of the redundancies, deficiencies, inconsistencies, and other admitted faults of alphabets in general may be reduced. The minor faults may be noted in a more summary manner; or be indicated as they occur.

Singularity in the use of any particular letter can scarcely be blamed when we consider an alphabet as what it is when taken by itself. There is no principle generally recognised which binds the speakers and spellers of one language to use the same letters that are used by others: and still less to use them with the same power. Every alphabet must be considered on its own merits. If the Englishman chooses to use *c* where the German uses *k*, it is no fault of the alphabet of either of them. The practice of either one or the other may be peculiar, exceptional, or even eccentric. Still, this is no reason against it. It is no part of one language to suit its spelling to that of another: though, at the same time, the greater the agreement between them the better. Absolute uniformity amounts, of course, to a universal alphabet; an admirable thing in itself, but one which we must wish for rather than expect. Nevertheless, extreme eccentricity in the use of a letter is a blemish. Nor is it a very common one. *P, b, t, d, k, s, l, m, n, r* are used with great uniformity throughout all the alphabets of Latin origin. The Hungarian, however, though in many respects a model alphabet, stands, I believe, alone in its use of *s*. In Hungarian it stands for *sh* as in *shire*; the *s* as in *sire* being represented by *sz*.

The misconception of the relation of sounds to one another, is a more serious evil. The English stands almost alone in treating the *i* in *fine* as the long sound of the *i* in *fin*: it is, really, that of short *ee* in *feet*; whereas our long *i* represents a shortened form of the combination of *a* (as in *father*) with *y=ay*: the sound of the *ai* in the German word *Baiern*=Bavaria. This is, doubtless, broader than the *ei* in *meine*=mine, but is equally compound; a compound made out of the same elements. So, too, with the *ou*, in *noun*, etc. Its real ele-

ments are $a + u$ (*oo*) ; or, as some say, $o + u$. In this mistaken view of the relation of certain vowels to each other, and the erroneous view as to the composition of our diphthongs, the English language is more than usually blameworthy. Then there are the faults which arise from the external relations rather than the intrinsic demerits of an orthography ; such as extraordinary accumulations of words of foreign origin, mixture of dialects, intrusion of a strange orthography, and the like. These are the elements of what we have already called the wear-and-tear of a language, and of these the English has had more than its fair proportion.

Such, with the exception of a few additional *minutiae*, are the chief reasons why alphabets and systems of spelling (we cannot always call them orthographies, but rather the contrary,) are insufficient for the purpose for which they are naturally intended—the representation or reproduction of language. They will now be summarised, and that in the reverse order to the one in which they have been exhibited.

1. Upon wear-and-tear, in a general way there is nothing more to be said.

2. Upon the original incompleteness of the alphabet, and the want of any uniform principle in its application, thus much can be said ; namely, that it is remediable. This can be said without reservation ; and, for the purpose under notice, it is saying everything ; for it means that a palpable and notorious evil ought to be remedied.

3. The etymological principle should, perhaps, have been put in a more general form. The inordinate preponderance, however, of the etymological objection over all others, especially in reference to the influence of the quarter from which it proceeds, makes it the representative principle of its class. A little consideration, however, shows us that the system upon which we distinguish the meanings of *rite*, *right*, *write*, and *wright* by the spelling, (our object being to indicate to the eye a difference of import when the sounds are identical,) comes under the same category—only its definition must be widened. Let us say, then, that the sacrifice of pure and proper Phonetic representation, when made for either the purpose of showing the origin of a word, or manifesting the difference of import between words similarly pronounced, (the differentiation principle,) are members of a higher class, the principle of which lies in the attempt to make spelling available for secondary and illegitimate objects, or to apply it to purposes for which it is neither intended nor appropriate.

It is possible, indeed, that by exploring the whole domain of language a few instances may be found where such a secondary object may, *when not bought at the price of the sacrifice of anything else*, be worthy of consideration. The cases, however, are yet to be found, and when found, have to be considered as exceptional, and (at best) excusable.

4. The extent to which the retention of old forms in the spelling,

when they have ceased to exist in the speaking, of a language, is desirable, is the question which is the least capable of being determined off-hand. As long as change goes on, there is always a period when it is difficult to say when the change on one side ought to be adopted to meet a change on the other. Sooner or later it may be made, but the right moment is difficult to determine. Here, then, more than elsewhere, are the innovators bound to place themselves, as much as possible, in the same light as the conservators.

If these divisions be natural, it is clear that there are degrees in the validity of the objections on one side, and in the claims for alteration on the other. The completion, however, of the alphabet, and the uniformity of its application are primary and absolute necessities. The limitation of the alphabet to its true function of representing a language differs from this so slightly that the difference has only been indicated for the sake of showing that it has not been overlooked. The fixation of a fluctuating pronunciation is a matter which must be left to settle itself. It is really a question of orthoepy rather than orthography.

SECTION XI.

AN ENGLISH GOSPEL TRANSLITERATED INTO THE LANGUAGE OF THE KORAN.

With all these elements of imperfection developed in an inordinate degree, it is not strange that the art of learning to read English should be a difficult one. An Englishman, indeed, is apt to underrate its difficulties. Foreigners, however, are generally candid enough to own that, what with the multiplicity of its rules and what with the number of its irregularities, the approaches to it are, to say the least, discouraging.

As an instance of this I will lay before the reader an account of an attempt to teach it by the method of transliteration; and I will tell the story as slowly as I can, in order that, between the beginning and the end of the narrative, he may exercise his ingenuity in guessing at the explanation of it. I have never yet found anyone to whom I told it succeed in doing so.

About fifteen years ago a friend sent me a copy of one of the Gospels (John) in the ordinary English text but in Arabic characters. I took it, at first, for a mere curiosity, though without pretending to see my way to the object of it. Even a professed Arabic scholar could not have read it off-hand. Letter for letter he could have spelt it, and would thus have arrived at something like something he had heard or seen before. However, the Preface told me what this was, and what was stranger still, told me that the work was one of a real practical value; that it was meant to be useful to certain men who, so far as the Arabic language was con-

cerned, were no Arabs at all, but, on the contrary, as far as the English went, very good Englishmen ; men, indeed, of one language only, and that the English. This they spoke as their mother tongue, and they spoke nothing else. They could not, however, be taught to read it in English letters, and according to the English orthography. Put the words in Arabic characters, and they could read with pleasure and profit. I repeat it—I never found anyone who could guess who these strange English Arabs might be. Yet the explanation was simple enough. How much Mahometanism there is in the purely African and Negro parts of Africa is well known. The Mandingos and the Fulahs are more Mahometan than the men of Mecca themselves. In Bornu and Howssa the Arabic is to the native what Latin used to be to the Pole and Hungarian. It is, to them, not only the learned language, but, practically, the only written one. Those who use it are, of course, Mahometans, and where there is Mahometanism there is the Koran. And now we have only to think of the slave trade, and to turn to the Southern States of North America. Most of the negroes of the plantations are pagans, and the descendants of pagans, men of many different languages and little knowledge of either reading or writing. Some, however, are either Mahometans, or of Mahometan blood ; and for these the Gospel was thus transliterated from English into Arabic, in order to secure the means of representing its pronunciation.

SECTION XII.

THE ALPHABET IN ITS EARLIEST FORMS.

Let us now ask how far we can trace the imperfection of our spelling backwards ; not, however, with an intention of giving anything like a natural history of the alphabet. This would lie beyond the scope of the present pages. Something, however, like a general view of the conditions under which the alphabets which have had the closest connection with our own were developed, may help us in the path of improvement, by showing how and when and in what directions the straight line of progress was abandoned.

The primary or primitive alphabet (the word "original" is often used in a different sense,) is generally attributed to the Phœnicians. We find it in a fuller form in the Hebrew, and hence it will often be called "Hebrew" in the present work. How are we to denominate such an alphabet ? Was it an invention, or was it a discovery ? Was it a mere application of something previously applied to something else ? It was none of these things exclusively. The first sign, or letter, if made out of the first author's brain, and out of nothing else, was more than an invention. It was a creation. If the sign, however, existed with another import, it was an application. It is only, however, in respect of the letters themselves that

the term invention applies. The signs of the alphabet may or may not have been invented. That, however, which led to them is more akin to a discovery, and this the most important ever made. It was the discovery that conversations could be resolved into words, and words into their elementary articulations. This is the great fundamental fact in the history of the alphabet; the mere representation of these articulatory elements, though a great matter, is one of only secondary importance. Out of these two elements the primitive alphabet emerged, but the former of the two is the more essential or fundamental.

The primitive alphabet, whatever else it may have been, was a combination of a marvelous symbolization subsequent to a still more marvelous analysis. The only thing to be analysed was floating conversations; for these are implied by the simple fact of the alphabet being primitive or absolutely original. So far as there was anything of the same kind antecedent to it, it was not primitive but derivational or imitative. All honor to the unknown inventor. As Carlyle says of the mysterious author of the great German poem the *Nibelungen-lied*, "What matters it to him or to us that the particular letters which composed his name be lost: his work remains." And the work of this our unknown analyst will remain to the end of time.

To attach to one man the full glory of having, single-handed, elaborated the whole fabric, from first to last, out of nothing, is to overwhelm a mere mortal with more than the honors of mortality. In some way or other, though we can scarcely see how, the thing grew. The analyst of spoken sentences may have been one man, the translator between the ear and the eye another. The signs may have been current with another import; may have served, for instance, to denote numbers. The analysis of sentences into words may have been done more or less completely by hieroglyphics. The further analysis of words into elements may have begun. Nevertheless, the earliest known approximation to an alphabet was a whole.

The first process was, as stated, an analysis as pure and simple as the taking to pieces of a watch. And this would begin with sentences. The resolution of these into their component words implies something like the germs of a grammar: for two words in one combination could only be treated separately, after cognisance had been taken of their separation in another. Analysis, up to this point, may exist for any length of time without leading to any scriptorial application, though without it an alphabet is scarcely possible.

The class of words with which it is the easiest to deal are the Interjections, the Numerals, the Personal Pronouns, the Affirmative and Negative Participles, inasmuch as these stand oftenest alone. The less the nouns and verbs were inflected the easier it would be. The process, too, would be easy in proportion as the language was monosyllabic, and strongly accented.

The analysis being carried to the isolation of the several elementary articulations of which the language consisted, the next step in the process was the translation of the symbols that spoke to the ear and passed away with the fleeting sound, to one which addressed the eye and was capable of being fixed. Any combination of lines and points would supply the signs by which this was to be done. How far these were quickly written, easily distinguished, or pleasantly read, was a matter of detail. If, as aforesaid, there were a set of monograms for some other purpose already in existence, the work of the alphabetographer would be facilitated.

The signs, however, for the sounds with which they corresponded (so far as the analysis was made) were either invented or transferred from some other application; and when the words which they composed were arranged in lines, the writing was from right to left; not as with us, from left to right.

Each letter had its name—*aleph* = A, *beth* = B, etc.; from these, when they became changed into the *alpha* and *beta* of the Greeks, the word "alphabet" is derived. In English we, for the most part, have no names of this kind. We merely say *bee*, *cee*, *dee*, etc.; *eff*, *aitch*, and *zed*, however, are true names—and very old ones too. They are the Hebrew *vav*, *heth*, and *tsaddi* respectively. The principle upon which these names were given has been a matter of speculation. Some have held that certain letters were named after certain objects, from their shapes resembling them; others that the name was taken from objects which themselves had a name beginning with the letters under consideration. Thus, *beth* was called *beth* because it was like a house (*beth*), or it was so called because the name for *house* began with *b*. In the history of the adoption of alphabets these speculations have their value; their bearing, however, on its origin is of the slightest. It is one thing for a child to be born, another for it to be named. When were these names given? Almost certainly before the application of the Phœnician alphabet to the Greek, inasmuch as, in the two languages, they are essentially the same.

The arrangement of these names, as we find them in dictionaries, gives the *order* of the alphabet. It is not accidental. It has the appearance of being both regular and scientific; but it is, also, so artificial that it requires some attention to understand it; and even then it is by no means square and clear. It can be illustrated, however, by our own A, B, C as well as by the Hebrew or Greek. Let us take the vowels first. Instead of coming together, they are found at intervals; *a* at the beginning, *u* nearly at the end of the alphabet; *e*, *i*, and *o* in the intermediate part of the series but not in contact with one another. There is something like regularity in the distances between them. After noting this let us look at the classification of the consonants: premising that only those letters will be noticed which are common to our own language and the Hebrew. This is not the scientific method. It is, however, convenient; and

for the object in hand, namely, the proof that the arrangement is systematic rather than arbitrary, sufficient. *B, f, p, and v* are allied letters; members of the same class; in the language of the Eton Greek Grammar *inter se cognatæ*. So are *k, (c), and g*, and with its origin power, *q*. So are *d* and *t*. Let us call the class represented by *b*, etc. number one; that represented by *k*, etc. number two; that represented by *d* and *t* number three. Now it may be found by simple inspection that the members of each class stand in the same relation of succession to each other and to the vowel. Thus:—

A ... vowel	E ... vowel	I ... vowel	O ... vowel
B ... class 1	F ... class 1	. . . . .	P ... class 1
C ... „ 2	G ... „ 2	K ... class 2	Q ... „ 2
D ... „ 3	. . . . .	. . . . .	T ... „ 3

with *t* the Hebrew alphabet ended. The first of these quaternions, (*c* being treated as *k*), is clear and definite; the other three are irregular; the third being greatly interfered with by the liquids *l, m,* and *n*; and the fourth by *r* and *s*. The relation, however, *as far as it goes*, is absolute. It may be said that it does not go far, which is granted. It is only submitted that it goes farther than mere accident would carry it. The date of this runs back, at least, as far as the adoption of the names of the letters by the Greeks.

We now know what to call the alphabet. It is the result of a very complex series of processes and operations. The analysis of sentences into words, and of words into syllables, and so on, is a great thing; but greater still—humanly speaking a wonderful instinct or intuition of genius, or, speaking the language suited to the thoughts of a higher sphere, an inspiration—is the conception that such an analysis was possible. Then comes the translation of the signs addressed to one sense into signs addressed to another; the process by which we speak to the eye and the process by which we write to the ear. To this, observation has mainly been subservient. For the particular signs, so far as such or such a letter was formed out of a new combination of lines and points, limited on every side by the conditions of reading and writing, invention was required; and that of the highest kind; and even when signs previously in use for other purposes were made available for a new purpose, acumen, tact, and judgement were demanded. How far all these conditions were complied with, or anticipated, by a single individual we shall never know. All that is here indicated is the complex nature of such an alphabet as has just been described. There is the great idea of the possibility of an analysis, and a representation. There are details of the analysis, and the details of the representative signs. There is the naming of them, and the arrangement of them. The alphabet, then, in its full form, is a system, a structure, a *construction*.

The only element in this construction to which we clearly see our way is the order of the letters. These served a double purpose. The letters were, in Hebrew and Greek, numerals as well. Why a

should precede *b* we cannot say. Why *a* should stand for 1, and *b* for 2 we cannot say. But, given the fact that such were their original powers as numerals, the order in which they stand is transparently intelligible.

SECTION XIII.

IS THERE MORE THAN ONE PRIMITIVE ALPHABET?

The process by which an alphabet is constructed has now been exhibited. Taking it *as a whole*, was it ever repeated? Was there ever a second alphabet invented, discovered, developed or constructed; equally primary, primitive, original, and independent with the one which has just been investigated? I think not. I think that the conception of decomposing the complex combinations of spoken sounds into their elements, and fixing them by visible signs, never entered into the head of any one but the original discoverer, except so far as he learned from others that the thing could be done, and (to some extent) the way of doing it. That men of genius have effected great things of the same kind is not denied. It is only suggested that they had some previous knowledge of the processes required for the result. There is, for instance, the Cherokee alphabet, of which more will be said in the sequel. There is the language called Vei, the alphabet of which has attracted a fair amount of attention. The "Vei Phonetic" appeared a few years back on the title-page of a volume of Travels; as a rival of the "Fœnetik Nuz" in respect to mystery of its import. "Vei," however, is the name of a dialect of the Mandingo language, spoken on the north-west coast of Africa, which enjoys the prerogative of having a native alphabet. The originator of it, himself a native, is, perhaps, still alive. The details of what he did have been stated on fair authority. He knew that white people could write, and he framed an alphabet for his countrymen. Hence, whether he could himself write or not, he had seen writing, had been the bearer of letters, and had admired the mystery of their import. I know of no nearer approach to invention than this. Nevertheless, I deny that this is the invention of writing. It wants the great element of independence; the self-born conception, without any precedent to guide it, of translating one kind of sign into another. This independent conception of a possible end, even more than the acumen displayed in the details of the instrument, constitutes in my mind the true basis of the construction of an alphabet.

In asking what alphabets have the best claim to an independent origin, we must eliminate those which are other than alphabetic in the ordinary sense of the term: and this means the Chinese, and the old Egyptian or Hieroglyphic.

With this limitation, those for which, either directly or indirectly, an origin other than Phœnician, has been claimed are—

1, 2. The Corean, and Japanese.

3-10. A remarkable group applied to certain languages of the Malay family; used either in time back or at present in the Philippine Islands, in Celebes, in Lombok, and (to the number of three) in the island of Sumatra.

11. Those of Southern India.

12. Those of Northern India.

These, it may be seen, are all found within the same geographical area, the South-Eastern division of Asia. They all originally belonged to the languages of either the Buddhist or the Brahminic religions. The Corean, the Japanese, and the alphabets of India do so still. Those, however, of the Malay group have a history of their own. They are sufficiently like each other to pass, with most critics, for members of a single family. The opposite view, however, has been taken; and the extreme opinion that they are all of independent origin has had its upholders; of which the most influential was one of our best Malay scholars, the late Mr Crawford. They are very unlike all other alphabets: and can be connected with those of India only by the assumption of an inordinate amount of alteration. When we bear in mind the language to which they applied; the rudeness of the tribes which used them; and, above all, the nature of the material on which they were written, (or sometimes, as on the stem of the bamboo, scratched or scraped,) this assumption is, in the mind of the present writer, legitimate. Still it is a point on which opinions differ. Be this, however, as it may; they have all dropped their connection with the religion through which they were introduced,—the Brahminism of India. The Battas of Sumatra have relapsed into something like their primitive paganism. Still they preserve their alphabet: and, as they are man-eaters, the combination of literature with cannibalism is remarkable. The three other Sumatran alphabets, those of the Rejang, Korinchi, and Lampong dialects, are used by a Mahometan population; so that they have the Arabic alphabet of the Koran to contend with: and to this they will probably give way altogether. In the Philippines, the dominant alphabet is that of the Spanish missionaries. In Lombok the literature seems to have always been as scanty as it is at present. The creed, however, is Mahometan, and the ordinary alphabet Arabic. In Celebes, however, though the creed is Mahometan, the native alphabet is still in use. It is written. More than this, it is printed.

This is as much as need here be said about them. Whatever may be their claims to an independent origin, they have no connection with our present investigation. Some, indeed, of our readers may possibly think that in the question of phonetic spelling for England we need not go so far as even Phœnicia. It is only certain that we need not go no farther.

SECTION XIV.

CAPITAL AND SMALL LETTERS—MONUMENTAL, CURSIVE,
AND PRINTED STYLES.

The original Phœnician alphabet, in its Hebrew form, though it gives us the germ and principles of all the alphabets derived from it, by no means gives us a notion of the changes which each letter was destined to undergo, in its transfer from country to country and from language to language. These, in many cases, end in absolute transformations. The history of them, however, is but imperfectly understood; the little that is actually known being known only of the earliest and the latest forms—or the two extremes. We know thoroughly the difference between the small letters and the capitals, and we know the difference between writing and printing, for these belong to our own times. We have also a fair knowledge of the early alphabet as it occurs in inscriptions. We know, in short, the alphabet of inscriptions and coins, the Lapidary alphabet, and the Numismatic alphabet; and we know that this was an alphabet of capital letters. But of the early Cursive alphabet for parchment or paper, we know but little. That the capitals took forms approaching those of the small or cursive ones, we know in certain particular cases. But all these are of a comparatively late date. And so it is when we come to the middle of the fifteenth century. We know how, when printing was invented, the cursive alphabet became an alphabet of stamps.

The difference, however, between capital and small letters was developed during the interval; only, however, in certain alphabets. In the printed Hebrew, and the printed Russian, all the letters are still capitals. In the Arabic they are all small, or cursive. Except then in the cases where either the capital or the small letter is predominant, there are, virtually, two alphabets—determined by the differences of the material for which they were intended, though, so far as they were of the same origin, only one.

And this difference of material is important. For incision we want straight lines and angles; for writing we want curves: whereas, for printing we can use both. A cursive letter, then, is something more than a capital of lesser growth; and, though the distinction need not always be acted on in the coinage of new letters, its existence must be recognised.

So much for the *two* alphabets, the small, (or cursive,) and the capital; and their connection with ordinary writing on the one side, and with coins and inscriptions on the other. When printing, however, was invented, these *two* became *four*, and every letter had four forms; a capital and a small one for the typesetter, and a capital and a small one for the penman.

SECTION XV.

THE PHONETIC AS OPPOSED TO THE ETYMOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE.

There is another point upon which a remark may now be made.

The alphabet more especially under notice, that employed in the *Phonetic Journal* by Mr Pitman is, in every sense of the word, Phonetic. As such it stands in contrast with the present incomplete alphabet with its corresponding faulty orthography. It is phonetic from first to last. It limits letters to the representation of sounds; to this and nothing else. Secondary objects, such as the suggestion of the etymological history of a word, as the differentiation of the meanings of words sounded alike, (with, however, a few exceptions, as *in*, *no* = "*in*, *nə*," and *inn*, *know* = *in*, *nó*) and as the fixation of the language, it utterly ignores. It not only ignores all this, but it goes to the length of doing away with all that has already been attempted in any of these directions, or with any of these intentions. To use a favorite expression of Sir William Hamilton's, it is "Thorough-going." As compared, then with the existing orthography it is phonetic in the highest degree, and the ordinary system is its opposite. Nevertheless, it does not follow that the ordinary system, notwithstanding this opposition, is wholly wanting in phonetic elements. It has them to a great extent; indeed no alphabet, and no orthography can exist without a phonetic element as its basis. It is only when they are so far warped by other influences as to become something different from that for which they were originally intended, that the opposition suggested by the word in its present sense becomes real. The Phonetic Principle is one thing: a Phonetic System of Spelling, consisting of an alphabet and its corresponding orthography, is another: and, in the forthcoming pages, the former—the Phonetic Principle—will mean the limitation of spelling to the representation of sounds only, and the exclusion of all secondary objects: generally, however, with special reference to the principle to which it is the most opposed—the Etymological or Historical Principle.

SECTION XVI.

ALPHABETS UNDOUBTEDLY DERIVED FROM THE PHŒNICIAN.

(a) THE EASTERN OR ASIATIC GROUP.

1. The Phœnician Alphabet itself is known only through coins and inscriptions; the great part of which are Punic rather than Phœnician, in the geographical sense of the word. *Punic* was another name for *Phœnician*, and Carthage was a Phœnician colony. Africa and Spain are the countries where Punic remains most abound. A specimen of the language of Carthage occurs in a play of the Latin comic writer, Plautus; where one of the characters, *Pœnulus*, or the

Little Carthaginian, speaks the language of the country. The writing, however, is Latin. The Phœnician alphabet, then, so far as we know it, is known only in respect to its capital letters.

2. The Samaritan alphabet, also, is written in capitals only. This is the alphabet of the famous copy of the Pentateuch; which is Hebrew in language and Samaritan in spelling. The so-called Samaritan Chronicle is, like the Pentateuch, in respect to its letters, Samaritan; though Arabic in language. This means that the Samaritan has obtained its original Lapidary character for more than a thousand years at least. It gives us the nearest approach to the original primitive alphabet of any alphabet at present in use.

3. The Hebrew of the Old Testament, although the alphabet of which the most is known, is, by no means, in respect to the shape of the letters, a good representative of the original. Yet it consists of capitals only. They are not, however, of the sort required for inscriptions. They are meant for writing. Nevertheless, they are wholly deficient in the cursive character. This is, doubtless, because they were not meant to be written as ordinary letters; but as Holy Scriptures. There is a boldness in their lines, and a squareness in their outline which has given them the name of the Quadrate Character. Written, or almost drawn, with a pious patience and observant care, they undergo but little change so long as they remain the letters of the holy text. As the Chaldee of the later writers, and a secular literature, they lose their massive regularity, and become more or less cursive. Still, in printing, there is but one sort of letter—the Capital.

Such is the Hebrew alphabet when written with the original twenty-two letters and no more. How inadequate this was to the representation of the vowel sounds has been already stated. This evil, however, is remedied in what is called the Masoretic text of the Old Testament. Here we have a full representation of the vowels: and, in the strict sense of the term, every sign thus superadded is a new letter. The Masoretic signs, however, of the vowels are not letters in the ordinary acceptance of the term. They are marks consisting of either short lines (— τ), or dots (: ∴ ∷) written over or under the consonants with which they combine; and as such are adjuncts or appendages, rather than true letters. Another use of the dot was to add it to certain consonants wherein two closely allied sounds had only one sign. These were true diacritical marks. The vowel-signs were something more. In the orthography of the class of languages now before us both play an important part. The Hebrew, with its direct derivatives, is the alphabet of Judaism.

4. The Syriac is, pre-eminently, the alphabet of Christianity—early Eastern Christianity. With the same framework of twenty-two consonants it has the same system of superadded vowels. These, however, are only three in number, and are borrowed from the Greek. There is no distinction between the small letters and the capitals in

writing; all the letters being small. In inscriptions, however, they are all capital, and that of an archaic character, that is, they approach the Phœnician. From the Syriac of the Nestorian missionaries we get the Uighur, or alphabet of the Turks of Central Asia; before their conversion to Christianity: and from this the Mongol, and from the Mongol the Mantshu. These two represent the languages of Buddhism, and are the most outlying, eccentric, or metamorphic of all the members of the class. All the letters are small; the lines run neither from right nor left, to from left to right, but from the top of the page to the bottom.

In the South-East where existed the pagan civilisation of the fire-worshippers of the Euphrates, the Tigris and the Syrian Desert, the alphabet, best represented by the inscriptions of Palmyra, gave origin to that of the Persians anterior to their conversion to Mahometanism. This is, at the present time, the alphabet of the Parsees.

5. In the Arabic, the alphabet of the Koran, the present Persian, Turkish, Hindostani, and Malay languages are written; all having, previous to the introduction of Mahometanism, been written in proper alphabets of their own. The Arabic, a growth out of an early form of the Syriac, is formed wholly for writing; the lapidary or inscription character being at a *minimum*. All the letters are small rather than capital, and as much as possible they are made to run into one another. Hence, most of them have three forms; one for the beginning, one for the middle, and one for the end of a word. The vowels, when written at all, are inserted, or rather superadded, on the Syriac principle. The fundamental consonants are few in number, indeed only the original twenty-two of the Hebrew alphabet. Hence, there is a necessity for diacritical dots.

6. The Abyssinian alphabet stands alone in its class. It is the alphabet of a so-called Christian country. It is written from left to right. Finally, it is a syllabarium rather than a series of simple signs for simple sounds.

SECTION XVII.

ALPHABETS UNDOUBTEDLY DERIVED FROM THE PHŒNICIAN.

(b) THE WESTERN OR EUROPEAN GROUP. THE GREEK AND ITS DERIVATIVES.

Whatever may been the number of elementary sounds in the Phœnician language, it was greater than that of the letters. The alphabet, then, was inadequate to the demands of the language for which it was constructed. Much more would it be so for a strange one. Fortunately, when extended to Greece, it fell into the hands of such a nation as the Greeks, for they had pre-eminently the capacity of improving, developing, and adorning whatever they touched.

With the Phœnician they agreed:—

a. In keeping the *order* of the letters.

b. In keeping their *names*.

Thus far, then, the Greeks were conservative: and no harm was done by their conservatism. Much good, on the other hand, was done by their innovations. The results of these were that, when the Greek alphabet became a model for others, it had the following form, and was applied to the language on the following principles:

1. Its letters in writing ran from the left to right. The Hebrew writing was from right to left.

2. Its capital letters were clearly distinguished from the small ones, and *vice versâ*. In some cases there was a mere rounding or softening down of an angle: so that a letter, previously fitted for inscriptions, became adapted for cursive writing. In others, the change amounted to the formation of a new letter.

3. Signs which were not wanted had disappeared, so that three letters which belonged to Hebrew, and which were at first adopted by the Greeks, no longer found a place in their alphabet. These were

(a) The Hebrew *vau*, or *vaf*, with the power of *v* or *w*. It was the sixth letter in both the Hebrew and the Greek alphabets, and, in the latter, when it ceased to be used as a *letter*, it was retained as a *numeral* = 6. It was called the *Digamma*, being, in form, like two *gammás*, one on the top of the other. As the Romans retained it, it still keeps its place in the alphabets of Latin origin, with a change of power and form; in other words, it is the *Digamma* which is the origin of our own letter *f*, its name *ef* being from the original *vav*.

(b) The Hebrew *kof*, *koph*, *quof*, or *quoph*. This, also, from having been retained by the Romans, has become the English *q*.

(c) The history of the letter known as the Doric *san* is more complex. Word for word, it seems to be the Hebrew *sin*, which is the name of the ordinary *s*, its place being between *r* and *t*. The Greek letter, however, which has this place and power is not called *san* but *sigma*, which seems to be, word for word, the Hebrew *samech*. *Samech*, however, is the name of another letter, one which has its place between *n* (*nun*) and *o* (*ayn*), and which, in Greek, so far as its place is concerned, is represented by *xi* (Ξ ξ). This *samech*, which in the Greek alphabet is thus transformed, seems, in the Latin to have been, at first, either rejected or allowed to become obsolete—*afterwards*, however, to have been admitted; its place, however, was at the end of the alphabet, where it now does duty as *x*.

4. A fourth letter underwent a more important change than any of the preceding. In the Hebrew alphabet it stood eighth. If we count the *Digamma*, it stands eighth in the Greek as well. Eighth, also, it is in the Latin, in the English, and, probably, in all alphabets of Latin origin. Its Hebrew name is *heth*, its English *aitch*, the two being, as word and word, the same. Now, whatever may have been the exact sound of this Hebrew *heth*, it is universally admitted to have been one akin to that of the modern *h*, that is, a breathing, an aspiration, or the like; or, if not this exactly, some

such sound as the German *ch*, at any rate a sound of the *k*, *g*, *h* series. The name of this letter the Greek converted into *hēta*; its shape they put into the form of the present *H*, but its sound, or power, they absolutely transformed. The Greek (*Η η*) is a vowel; the *ee* in *feet*, or the long sound of the Epsilon (*Ε ε*) or *e* in *fen*. On this change from a consonantal or semi-consonantal, to an undoubtedly vocalic sound, more will be said hereafter; inasmuch as *heth* was not the only letter thus transmuted.

5. But there is a further innovation connected with this same *heth*. As a letter under the name of *hēta* it did, for the Greeks, the work of a vowel. What, however, did it do in its capacity of an aspiration or breathing, or as the origin of the Latin *h*? It became a mark. Perhaps we may call it a diacritical mark. At any rate it became an appendage to a letter rather than the body of the letter itself. As an appendage, its proper place was before the vowels: and the vowel *upsilon* (*Υ υ*) was *always* preceded by it. Moreover, with a slight extension of its powers, it became a regular concomitant of consonant *r*, just as if, in English, we never wrote *ra* or *re*, etc., but always *rha* or *rhe*. There can be but little doubt that, here, it denotes a vibration of the tongue rather than a simple breathing. Now, with the power of an *h*, this sign (') was, to a great extent, a letter also. It was, doubtless, very abnormal and exceptional in its form. Nevertheless, there is nothing in the conception of either a letter or an alphabet which prevents any two signs being of different sizes: though, at the same time, every alphabet requires some approach to symmetry. Still, (') never passed for a letter in Greece; because, as the letters were numerals also, a disturbance in the order would have been the result.

That it was amply sufficient for the purpose it was meant for is evident. Practically, a vowel is either preceded by a breathing or it is not; so that when once we have a sign for the presence of one we have no need of a second in order to denote its absence. Upon this principle, the (') itself might have been dispensed with; for a mark attached to the vowel of the non-aspirated division would have made it unnecessary.

6. The Greeks, however, thought otherwise, the result being that a second mark of the same kind was adopted. This was the same comma-shaped prefix with its tail turned. *Hagios* was written ἅγιος; and *ago* appeared as ἄγω. Unwilling as we may be to impute error to the Greek orthographists, we can scarcely commend this superfluity of signs indicative of *h* and no *h*.

7. The Greeks saw, or seem to have seen, the true nature of the sounds of the *ph* in *Philip*, the *th* in *thick*, and the *ch* (*kh*) in the German *auch*, *noch*, etc. We call them Aspirates, and as an aspirate is a breathing, and as a breathing is represented by *h*, and as the three sounds are, respectively, connected with *p*, *t*, and *k*, we see nothing wrong in writing them as if they were *p + h*, *t + h*, and *k + h*: an egregious blunder which we may lay to the charge of the

Latin alphabet, as may be seen ere long. And this is why I say that the Greeks "saw, or *seemed to have seen*, the true nature," etc. Of the *h* they saw nothing at all. Of its equivalent the ' they saw a good deal. But whether they saw that $\pi +$ was not ϕ (the sign for *f*) is doubtful. What they really saw of this supposed aspiration which converted the sound of *p* into that of *f*, etc., was just nothing at all. And this was the very best thing that could be seen. They corrected no blunder. They rose above no confusion. They simply formed their alphabet before either blunder or confusion had taken birth.

8. They recognised the principle of compendiums; for they wrote $\Xi \xi$ and $\Psi \psi$ for *ks* and *ps*. The two signs, however, are not in the same class. $\Xi \xi$ belongs to the main body of the alphabet, for it stands in the place of the Hebrew *samech*, between *omikron* or *ayn*. Ψ , relegated to the end of the alphabet, was a later addition.

9. Their crowning merit, however, was that, in the case of *e* and *o* they drew a distinction between the long and the short vowel: and well had it been had they gone further in this direction. As it is, the differences between the long and short *a*, *i*, and *u*, are unexpressed.

11. For expressing the shortness of a vowel of doubtful length or quantity they doubled the consonant that followed, *Thalassa* or $\Theta α λ α σ σ α = sea$.

11. The last great change made on the original alphabet by the Greeks, is, perhaps, one which outweighs all the other improvements. It has already been foreshadowed, but due prominence must now be given to it. Whatever may have been the actual sounds of the Hebrew vowels out of which *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u* originated, they were not decidedly and universally vocalic. They were rather breathings, gutturals with the character of an exaggerated breathing, or nasals. They were, perhaps, as much consonantal as vocalic. At any rate, we have seen that in the Hebrew Bible for ordinary reading they have the signs of the true and genuine vowel superadded. Whatever may have been its nature, there was a shortcoming in the orthography in this respect which needed amendment; and this the Greeks made. The *heth*, which they converted into an unequivocal long *e*, is with us *h*. The other vowels, however, have preserved their character, and that to the infinite benefit of mankind.

The Greeks have certainly done great things in the history of the alphabet. The incidental errors such as that of the Ψ , the two breathings, and the expression of the shortness of the preceding vowel by the doubling of the consonant by which it is followed, are venial offences. The elimination of useless letters, the partial completion of the alphabet by the formation of new letters, and above all, the unequivocal character given to the vowels are great and unmixed benefits.

It is almost invidious to ask what they did *not* do: nor, with our imperfect knowledge of the more minute details of their system of

sounds can ~~be~~ we say with certainty how much or how little they neglected. This, however is certain that, if the vowel *o* had a third power, if *a* *i* or *u* had a second, if the language contained the sounds of *v*, of the *th* in *thine*, of *gh*; of the *sh* in *shine*, or of the *z* in *azure*, (and some of them, it doubtless, had) they constructed no signs by which they might be expressed. Thus far, then, and no farther, go their sins of either commission or omission.

Let due attention be paid to the four letters Ω ω, Φ φ, Χ χ, Ψ ψ. They are the first instances, in any derived alphabet, of any new character.⁽²⁾

Number.	Greek Letter.	Greek Name.	Hebrew Letter.	Hebrew Name.
1	α'	Alpha	א	Aleph (Alef)
2	β'	Beta	ב	Beth
3	γ'	Gamma	ג	Gimel
4	δ'	Delta	ד	Dalet
5	ε'	Epsilon	ה	He
* 6	Ϝ	Digamma	ו	Vau
7	ζ'	Zeta	ז	Zayn
8	η'	Eta	ח	Heth (or Kheth)
9	θ'	Theta	ט	Teth
10	ι'	Iota	י	Yod
11	β'	—	—	—
12	γ'	—	—	—
13, etc....	δ', etc....	—	—	—
20	κ'	Kappa	כ	Kaph (Kaf)
21, etc....	κα'	—	—	—
30	λ'	Lambda	ל	Lamed
31	μ'	Mu	מ	Mem
50	ν'	Nu	נ	Nun
60	ξ'	Ksi (Ξ)	ס	Samech
70	ο'	Omikron	ע	Ayn
80	π'	Pi	פ	Pe
—	—	—	צ	Tsaddi
* 90	Ϟ	Koppa	ק	Koph
100	ρ'	Rho	ר	Resh
200	σ'	Sigma	ש	Sin (or Shin)
300	τ'	Tau	ת	Tau
400	υ'	Upsilon	—	—
500	φ'	Phi (Φ)	—	—
600	χ'	Chi (Χ)	—	—
700	ψ'	Psi	—	—
800	ω'	Omega	—	—
* 900	Ϡ	Sampi	—	—
1,000	α	—	—	—
2,000	β	—	—	—
3,000, etc....	γ	—	—	—
10,000	ι	—	—	—
20,000, etc....	κ	—	—	—
100,000	ρ	—	—	—

2. Without the mark (') these signs are letters; with it, numerals.

The first language to which the Greek alphabet was extended was the *Coptic* or *Egyptian*; the Coptic being the oldest language of Greek origin. It consists of thirty-one letters, of which the first twenty-four are Greek both in shape and name—*Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta*, etc. In respect to their power as numerals there is a curious change. The Greek sign for 90 was the letter which corresponded with the Hebrew *Qof*, that is, *Koppa*; but this, as the sign of a sound, was obsolete in the Greek. The Egyptians, then, who only adopted the true letters had no numeral for 90. So they expressed it by the *second* of their additional ones, that is, by the twenty-sixth, thus throwing the agreement between their letters and numerals out of form. It was as if in English we counted thus

Letter	15	...	O=70	
"	16	...	P=80	
		...	Q	(Supposed to be wanting.)
"	17	...	R=100	
"	18	...	S=200	
"	19	...	T=300	
"	20	...	U=400	
"	21	...	V=500	
"	22	...	W=600	
		...	X	(Supposed to be wanting.)
"	23	...	Y=700	
"	24	...	Z=800	
"	25	...	...	(In Coptic, no numeral power at all.)
"	26	...	...	90

The remaining signs having no numerical power at all, there is no letter expressive of 900. There *was* one in Greek: but like the sign for 90 it had dropped out of the alphabet *as a letter* before it was introduced into the Egyptian. This is the only clue we have as to the date of the Coptic alphabet. The two languages came in contact with one another as early as the seventh century B.C., when Cyrene was colonized by the Greeks. The only compositions however, which have come down to us are subsequent to the introduction of Christianity.

The second alphabet formed after the model of the Greek was the *Armenian*: yet, if we look at the shape of the letters only we see no signs of the connexion. They are not Greek. They have no resemblance to the Greek. They have no resemblance to anything of Greek extraction. Sign for sign, they are as unlike those of Greece as the Greek letters are unlike the Sanskrit. They are thirty-six in number. Their names, however, are of Greek origin; and these, along with the circumstances connected with their history, point to Greece. Besides which, they are equally unlike anything else. If so, the system is that of an absolute metamorphosis or transmutation; so complete as to exclude the very notion of identity. Yet the Greek origin of the Armenian alphabet is universally admitted.

These thirty-six letters are evidently the construction of a single

workman; and he who made the signs, probably effected the analysis of the language to which they applied. But the great difficulty in doing this, as is abundantly shown by our numerous missionary alphabets, is only wonderful when it is done for the first time. Its great element is the conception that such a thing is possible. As for the letters themselves we can only say, when we look at them, that such a man as the constructor of the Armenian alphabet is just the very one that is now wanted: the man who would meet and rebut and perhaps anticipate, what Mr Ellis calls the *strange-appearance objection*. It is certain, however, that he would disappoint our expectation.

Miesrob, for that is the name of this Armenian Cadmus, had he an alphabet like the English to deal with, would probably have failed in constructing a single letter; for he would have had to make it in harmony with those already made. It is possible that, individually, I exaggerate the difficulty of doing so. At any rate, I feel sure that Miesrob felt it. The whole to him seems to have been easier than the part. What, then, did he do? He made a whole alphabet of thirty-six letters at once; and I firmly believe that, in so doing, he found his work comparatively easy.

The *Georgian* alphabet, letter for letter, is as unlike the Armenian as the Armenian is unlike the Greek; yet it is the Armenian on which it is founded. It has the same number of letters, for nearly the same sounds. In shape, however, the letters are curvilinear, whereas the Armenian are angular. Like the Armenian, it seems to be the work of a single constructor. These two alphabets, so far as the number and the adequacy of their letters are concerned, are two of the best in existence. The Armenian, however, is very trying to the eye; the interspaces between the lines that form the letters being but little wider than the lines themselves. Of late, the Georgian has been used by the Russian philologues in their alphabets for the numerous, hitherto, unwritten languages of Caucasus. These abound in strange gutturals and sibilants; and when the ordinary letters and diacritical marks are exhausted, recourse is had to the Georgian.

We now come to the alphabets of the *Slavonic* languages. Where the creed is that of the Eastern Church—the Greek Church as it is often called—the alphabet is of Greek origin. Such are the *Cyrillian* and the *Glagolitic*. The first belongs to the Servian and Bulgarian languages; the construction of which is attributed to the missionary *Cyrillus* in the seventh century, and is the foundation of the Russian. The second is, at present, obsolete: since the dialects to which it applied, those of *Dalmatia*, *Carinthia*, and the Slavonic districts of the old Roman province of *Illyricum*, are Roman Catholic.

The Slavonic alphabets of Greek origin are formed upon the capital rather than the small letters, and are by no means so pleasant to read as the Greek itself. On the other hand they are all

formed on the principle of new signs for new sounds : so that they rank among the best for completeness. Notwithstanding this, the Greek alphabet itself has not been adapted to the changes which several of its letters have undergone. Thus the Beta and Delta have long been sounded as *v* and *dh*, (that is, as the *th* in *thine*) : yet for *b* and *d*, when they occur in words of foreign origin, there are no better signs in modern Greek than *Mß*, and *Nr*. Again, certain vowels and diphthongs have merged their originally independent powers into that of the *ee* in *feet* ; nevertheless, the full number is still kept up. Hence, though we know how to sound a word when we read it, we doubt as to the spelling of it when heard.

The Greek alphabet, with diacritical marks, is extended to the language of Albania.

In like manner, the Servian is used for the language of the Danubian Principalities ; a language of Latin origin. Of the Mæso-gothic notice will be taken hereafter.

SECTION XVIII.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE FOUR CLASSES OF ALPHABETS—

THE PHŒNICIAN GROUP.

We may now look back and take a general view of the three primary classes into which the alphabets of the world are reducible ; and, at the same time, by anticipating, take notice of the fourth ; though, as this last is the one which bears exclusively and directly on our subject, the full understanding will be best got from the working of it. To appreciate, however, its relations to the other three, something must be said about it now.

The characteristics of the Phœnician family are palpably conspicuous. It is only in this class that we find, after their earliest infancy, the system of writing from left to right. Here, too, and here only, occurs the still more eccentric practice of writing vertically, or from the top to the bottom of the page. Here, too, do we find oftener than elsewhere alphabets consisting of capitals only, or of small letters only. Here, also, we find the earliest syllabarium : at any time a rare form. Above all, here it is where we find an alphabet originally consisting of consonants, or imperfect vowels only, and, as a result of this, the whole system of vowels delegated to a system of supplementary (we must not call them diacritical) marks,—points, dots, or what not. The details of this system are admirably given in the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible ; indeed they have never been given better or so well. But their merits are more than counterbalanced by the mere fact of their being supplementary. They are no integral parts of the system of writing. They can be, and are dispensed with. In the derivative alphabets only, a few of them are retained. In fact, the recognition of the paramount importance of the vowels is exceptional throughout

the whole Phœnician family or group. The original defect of the alphabet, which was, at once, consonantal and incomplete even in its consonantality, seems never, except in one exceptional instance, which will be noticed hereafter, to have been remedied: for, though, as in the Arabic, the number of letters may be nearly doubled, there is no thoroughly new sign. One old one is made into two or more new ones, new ones by diacritical marks; and these are so much part and parcels of the several letters to which they appertain that they can scarcely be called diacritical.

SECTION XIX.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE GREEK GROUP.

There is no comparison between the Greek and the Phœnician in respect to the number of secondary alphabets to which they have given origin; nor yet in respect to the geographical area over which they have spread. The single fact of the Arabic being the alphabet of the Koran, has extended its domain from the Straits of Gibraltar to Sumatra; has carried it, as the medium of the Hindostani language, into the very heart of India; and, as that of the Turkish, into the South-eastern parts of Europe. The only language that has a tendency to increase in area, to which an alphabet of Greek origin has been applied, is the Russian; and this is, doubtless, an important one. The Coptic language is no longer a spoken one; while the Georgian, the Armenian, and the Albanian are spoken over small areas only.

The difference in respect to the figures of the letters in the different languages of this group is great. The Coptic makes the nearest approach to the original. The Georgian and the Armenian recede the farthest from it.

It is the Greek group in which the most new signs have been constructed; we may say, indeed, that it is here, and here only, that freedom has been the rule, and restriction the exception. So it was when the modern Russian, the latest member of the class, was constructed; so it was when the signs τ υ , ϕ ϕ , χ χ , ψ ψ , and ω ω were added to the primitive Phœnician. So, too, it was when the distinction between the long and short *e*'s and *o*'s was first indicated.

SECTION XX.

GENERAL VIEW, ETC.—THE ALPHABET CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF WHICH OPINION IS DIVIDED.

The class, in so far as it is characterized by a negative element, is convenient rather than natural. Neither is it, for the present question, important. The alphabets which belong to it are mainly connected with the Brahminic and Buddhist religions; the Sanskrit and the Pali being the chief of them.

They are old ; the earliest application of an alphabet of the class dating from B.C. 280.⁽³⁾

With the alphabets of Latin origin, or those of the class to which our own belongs, they have no direct relation : except so far as the transliteration of the languages of India is a matter of importance to the rulers of India. With those of Greek and Phœnician origin the relations are closer. The Zend and Pehlevi, or Huzvaresh, the alphabets of the Parsee religions are so Sanskritic in respect to their vowel-system as to invest them with a character at variance with that of the class to which they belong, or the Phœnician.

The Sanskrit is the only language of this class which will again be referred to.

SECTION XXI.

GENERAL VIEW, ETC., ALPHABETS OF LATIN ORIGIN.

The alphabets of Latin origin are simply the Latin alphabet itself, with certain omissions and modifications ; for genuine additions there are none. The diphthongs “æ” and “œ” are the nearest approaches to a new letter ; but they are only approaches. The cedillac “ç” and other variations of figure are the same. Of these, however, and the like of them, along with diacritical and other marks, there is an abundance.

They are, in respect to their geographical distribution, the alphabets of Western Europe ; but this means the Europe of the Western division of the Roman Empire, which again means the Europe of which the Christianity is that of the Western Church. In this we have the reason of their uniformity. They were extended from one language to another on a system, and under similar conditions ; the influence being in most, perhaps in all cases, that of the Church. In writing then, we of course, take no cognizance of those languages and countries to which the extension of this alphabet is of wholly recent date ; the cases which here present themselves being mere details in the history of some modern language, Spanish, French, Dutch, or English, as the case may be.

The languages which are thus represented belong to the following families—

1. The Latin itself—these being the Italian, the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the French ; and, of less importance, the Provençal and the Romane (Rumonsch) of the Grison districts of Switzerland. The Rumany of the Danubian Principalities belongs to this group. Its alphabet, however, is of Servian ; that is, of Greek, origin. An attempt to change it for a modified form of the Latin is going on at the present moment ; indeed it is in the Danubian Principalities

3. For the alphabet and the coins of this period in the north of Persia and the north-western parts of India, the reader is referred to Wilson's “*Ariana Antiqua*.”

that the greatest experiments connected with phonetic spelling ^{are} is going on. At the same time, it is an experiment in Transliteration, or Metagraphy, rather than in pure Phoneticism.

2. The British and Irish Gaelic of the Keltic class.

3. The German, Dutch, English, and Scandinavian forms of speech; the class to which they belong being the Teutonic.

4. The languages of the Roman Catholic populations of the Slavonic family, that is, the Bohemians, the Poles, the Carinthians and Dalmatians, etc.

5. The Lett and Lithuanic of Livonia, Curland, and Lithuania.

6. The Magyar language of Hungary; the word *Magyar* meaning *Hungarian* in the most limited sense of the term. The languages of Hungary, if we use the word in either its geographical or its political sense, are, taken collectively, other than Magyar: and so are the alphabets. Thus the Slovak of the North West is Tshek, or Bohemian, in respect to its writing, and nearly so in respect to its spoken language; in other words it is a provincial form of speech of which the Bohemian is the standard. On the North East the Ruthenians, whose language is that of Little Russia are numerous. On the South East there is a strong Servian element; while, in Croatia the language is akin to that of Dalmatia, and, when it is written at all, written like the Dalmatian and the Carinthian. Besides these, there is the German of the towns, and the Wallachian of the country districts of Transylvania. The *Magyar*, then, is the language of the Hungarians Proper; and it has long been known as a language of the Fin or Illyrian family; with its nearest congeners in Northern Europe and Siberia.

The alphabet, however, is more Slavonic than the language. Its letters are Latin; but the principles by which they are combined into diagraphs is more Slavonic than aught else. In the use, however, of the letter *s*, the Magyars stand alone. It is sounded as *sh*; so that in order to denote the ordinary sound, recourse is had to a combination; and this is *sz*.

7. Of the Fin, Lap, and a few other alphabets of this class, notice will be taken hereafter.

SECTION XXII.

THE LATIN ALPHABET.

The Phœnician prototype from which the Greek originated, was also the original of the Latin; the Latin, however, was only one alphabet out of four, or perhaps five or six, which extended beyond the Adriatic. There are inscriptions in Spain which indicate what is properly called an *Iberian* form of the Phœnician. There was, probably, a similar modification of it for *Gaul*; unless this, as is very probable, was simply the Greek of Marseilles. There was an *Etruscan* alphabet for Italy; the language to which it was applied

being of uncertain origin ; but which, from no point of view, was Latin. Lastly, there were either three alphabets, or three modifications of the same alphabet, for the allied dialects of the Oscan, the Umbrian, and the Latin ; and besides these, certain alphabets for certain inscriptions, the language and import of which have yet to be determined.

The two points connected with the Latin which are, at one and the same time, sufficiently general and sufficiently separated from what follows to claim notice here, are—

1. The separation of the numerical from the phonetic power of the letters. *A* was simply, in Latin, the sign of a sound. In Greek it was the numeral 1 as well. How much the notation of the number lost by the practice of the Italian method of substituting such clumsy signs as I, II, III, IV, etc. for letters, it is for the mathematician to decide. It was certainly a gain to the alphabet ; indeed, the alphabet for the first time, now came to be purely alphabetic. The result of this was, that, in the Latin alphabet, the condition of order or sequence in the arrangement of the A, B, C ceased to be imperative. As the Latin arrangement is that of ninety-nine dictionaries and Encyclopædias out of a hundred, we may say that the “dictionary alphabet” is the Latin alphabet.

2. The Latin is the alphabet of the printing-press.

All beyond this will show itself as we follow the other characteristics of the Latin in the investigation of the details of its application.

SECTION XXIII.

THE LATIN ALPHABET—THE ORDER OF THE LETTERS.

Both the Greek and the Latin alphabets must be supposed to have originally ended with the letter *tau*, or *t* : for so the Hebrew alphabet ends. But beyond *t* there are the five additional letters τ υ , ϕ ϕ , χ χ , ψ ψ , ω ω , in Greek ; and in Latin, U, u : V, v : X, x ; Y, y ; Z, z. How the Greek got them is doubtful ; for the doctrine that they can be ascribed to certain specified inventors is insufficiently supported by evidence ; though the claims of Simonides to have been an innovator or improver, deserve attention. In Latin the last four seem to have been introduced from the Greek ; and, as they formed no part of the original alphabet, to have been relegated to the end. This is manifestly the case with *z*, as the Greek *Zeta*, or the Hebrew *Zain*, stands seventh in those alphabets. The Romans could venture on an alteration of this kind with impunity ; inasmuch as their alphabet consisted of letters only, whereas those of the Greeks and Hebrews consisted of both letters and numerals ; or rather, of signs which served in both capacities ; and for which some regular order was a necessity.

Z, z, is the letter to which this explanation applies most conspicuously. With *Y, y*, the case is less clear. *Y* agrees exactly

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with the Greek ψ in place. It agrees, to some extent, in form. In power it disagrees altogether. Nevertheless, the two signs are connected in origin, though signs of a different import. X, x , is the Greek ξ (*xi*) the Hebrew *Samech*, which, in the first instance, the Latin alphabet either ignored or neglected to keep. It took the form, however, of x, χ (*Khi*.) the letter with which it corresponded in place, though with a different import. For the two remaining letters, Φ, ϕ , and V, v and τ, υ , U, u we may probably claim an independent origin in each alphabet, or, at any rate, an early one of obscure origin; for notwithstanding the extent to which U, u and V, v seem to be mere varieties of the same letter, (one for the purposes of ordinary writing, the other for inscriptions,) I cannot but think that they stand in the same relation to one another as υ and ϕ in Greek.

More important, however, than the consideration of the order, is that of—

SECTION XXIV.

THE MERITS OF THE LATIN ALPHABET.

The merits of the Latin Alphabet are as follows:

1. It emancipated itself from the connexion with the numeral system; but the freedom thus created for the classification of the letters according to their affinities was never carried onward toward its legitimate results. A thorough classification of this kind is found in the Sanskrit only.

2. It improved the diacritical mark (') as the sign of a breathing, or as an aspirate, into the truly alphabetic letter H, h . This is the only genuine new letter it has given us. It was, however, bought at a price. By gaining a sign for the aspirate they lost one for the short e (*Epsilon*.)

3. It kept the letter wanted thus preserving, for subsequent use in Western Europe, the letter F, f ; which was the Hebrew *Vau*, which the Greeks allowed to become obsolete as a letter, though they kept it as a numeral.

4. It rejected, in the first instance at least, the compendium X, x : though, under Greek influence, it took it back afterwards. Upon Q, q more will be said hereafter.

Subject to these reservations, all these were movements in the right direction.

SECTION XXV.

THE DEMERITS OF THE LATIN ALPHABET.

The very fact of new letters being introduced from the Greek for the purpose of spelling words of Greek origin, tells us, in unmistakeable language, that the Etymological Principle has now been recognized.

The loss of the sign for the Greek *Epsilon* was, as has just been stated, the price of the letter *H, h*. The difference between the long and short *O, o*; the *Omikron* and *Omega* of the Greek, was in like manner left unexpressed.

The letter *H h*, so long as it kept its proper place, was a good servant; when it got beyond it, a bad master. The misapplication of it has been the source of three serious evils; for it has spread from the Latin to most of the languages derived from it; where it has affected not only the native words, but even such Greek ones as may have been introduced into it;—words in the spelling of which it is singularly inappropriate.

1. *Simple misrepresentation*.—For this it is when we imagine that the sound of the *ph* in *philosophy*, etc., is really the result of a *bona fide* combination of *p + h*, etc. That it is allied to the sound of *p* is true; but it is equally true that, neither wholly nor in part, is it the same. Nor is the difference the result of any addition of *h*; though the prolongation of the breathing has something (much indeed) to do with it. The sound, in short, is a simple one; one incapable either of being decomposed into its parts, or built-up out of the combination of any two independent articulations. If it were otherwise, and if the letter *h* accurately represented the difference, the sound which stands in the same relation to *b* should be spelt on the same principle; and *v* be expressed by *bh*; in which case *vase* would be written *bhase* even as *fase* is *phase*. We know that, practically, this is not the case with *b*; but we should, also, know that it is not the case, theoretically, with *p*.

2. *The diversion of the combination from its real power*.—When the real sound of a consonant followed by *h* has to be represented, confusion arises. Such is the case in words like *haphazard*, *inkhorn*, *nuthook* and *hogshead*; where the second element begins with an aspirate. That this ambiguity can be abated by the insertion of a hyphen between the two contiguous letters is certain; for we can write *hap-hazard*, *nut-hook*, and the like. The expedient, however, simple though it be, is one which is unnecessarily forced upon us.

In compounds where not only the second element begins with an *h*, but the first ends in one, the objection is stronger. In words like *Bathampton* (so far as the elements are *Bath* and *Hampton*), *Southampton*, the *h* does double duty; and, in more cases than one, uncertainty as to the true elements of the compound has arisen.

3. *The establishment of a precedent for digraphs*.—This is

—— the head and front of the offending.

The preceding evils have been mere matters of detail. The one now under notice is the establishment of a vicious and pernicious principle. The combinations *ph*, *th*, and *ch*, as the Latin equivalents to *ϕ*, *θ*, and *χ*, are the fathers of all subsequent digraphs; the protoplasts of the family of the Makeshifts.

SECTION XXVI.

THE SUBSTITUTION OF THE LETTER C FOR K—K AND S
AS SOUNDS.

How *c* came to be used in the Latin Alphabet to the practical exclusion of *k* is a matter connected with the history of the alphabet which need not at present be gone into. We shall best appreciate the full import of the substitution by seeing what it has led to.

C by no means stands alone. This we cannot too closely attend to. What applies to *c* applies to other letters as well: in short, *c* as a letter, is pre-eminently a representative one.

In both the compendiums of the English alphabet, *q* and *x*, the sound of *c* enters.

In most digraphs we have either *c* or *k*, or both.

In the system of orthographical expedients, *c* is more conspicuous than all the other letters put together.

Let us begin with what is a good groundwork in all questions of the kind, provided that we can get it; a fact of Language; of Language itself as opposed to spelling, or the mere representation of language; a fact in the history of speaking, not merely of writing, a fact appertaining to the real object rather than to the picture of it. Let the language be what it may, it is a fact that wherever we have the sound of the *k* as in *king*, it is always likely, sooner or later, to be converted into the sound of the *s* in *sing*; or if not this exactly, into something akin to it,—into that of the *ch* in *chest*, or the *j* in *jest*, or something wherein the sound of *s* or its fellow-sibilant *sh*, enters. For what is the *ch* in *chest* but *tsh*, and what is the *j* in *jest* but *dzh*; and what is *sh* but *s* with a modification, or *zh* but a modification of *z* which is a sonant *s*? To *s*, then, in some shape or other every sound of *k* in existence has a tendency to be reduced. The process may be slow, or it may be quick. There are words in which it has not yet been completed; there are words in which it has not yet begun; and there are words in which it never may begin, or words which will be sounded with *k* until the language to which they belong is extinct. Still there is the tendency; while, on the other hand, there are words in which the *k* may have been changed three thousand years ago, or before the oldest alphabetical record in existence.

The change, then, or the tendency towards it, is a fact in language; the representation of it is a fact in orthography. The two may or may not coincide. If they do not, there is the risk of confusion sooner or later. At present, however, the fact in language is the only one under notice.

The first step in the investigation of this lies in the difference between the broad *k* and the small vowels—*a*, *o*, *u* on the one side, and *e*, *i*, (and *y*) on the other. We know what happens to these empirically. Before the broad ones, *c* is sounded as *k*; before the small

ones as *s*. But they were not always so pronounced. If they were, why was the *s* used in spelling? The *s* sign existed. Why was the *c* necessary? Because words which once had the sound of *k* no longer retained it; and because words which now have that of *s* had it not when they were first spelt. There is something, then, *non-natural* in this use of *c* = *s*: and the reason of it lies in the fact that the change of sound and the expression of it in spelling have not coincided. At present, however, the difference between a broad and a small vowel upon the sound of the letter by which they are preceded is the question in hand.

K before a small vowel has a tendency to become *s*. Has *k* the same tendency before a broad one? I think not. *Kop* will not *directly* become *sop*, *shop*, or *tshop* (*chop*); and the same applies to *ka* and *ku*—*not directly*. But here comes in the influence of the semi-vowel *y*. Now there *is* a tendency to say *kyard* for *kard* (*card*); and *kyind* for *kind*, even with a small vowel. The result may be a vulgarism, a Cockneyism, or the like. But, be it what it may, the change may be either introduced or kept up by so many speakers as to constitute a difference of dialect; and if that dialect happen to become the dialect out of which the literary language is developed, it becomes an error which corrects itself, a wrong which, by precedent and prescription, ends in constituting a right. It is a prophecy which fulfils its own accomplishment. Such, with the letter *k*, is the case with no smaller a language than the Italian. The literary Italian is the Florentine or Tuscan. But the Florentines (so to say) dropped their *k*'s (*Aitches*). Before, however, the practice was noted and condemned as a vulgarism the dialect had become predominant, and the practice established. Hence, while it is a shocking thing to "*exasperate*" an aitch in English, it is equally objectionable to sound one in Italian.

But *y* after *k* comports itself as a small vowel; so that, when once *kard* (*card*) is sounded *kyard*, it is in the same predicament as *kird*. That the subsequent details of the change are different for the two combinations will be shown in the sequel: nor will the whole of them be exhibited. *Kyard*, does not, *directly*, become *sard*. It rather becomes *ksard* and *tshard*. It is submitted, however, that, as a fact in language, this is an adequate notice of the principle by which it is determined.

What we have now to investigate is the result of these tendencies, and the extent to which they may affect a language. This depends, mainly, upon the proportion which the sounds of *k* and *s* bear to those of the rest of the alphabet. The greater the share they take in the formation of any particular tongue the greater is the amount of their possible changes; so that here again we are about to be engaged with a fact of language as opposed to one of orthography.

C has already been called a representative letter. But it is this mainly on the strength of its two-sided relations towards *k* and *s*.

It is in these that we must seek the realities of the question before us. *K* and *s* represent actual articulations, true elementary sounds, genuine consonants. *C* merely stands for *s* or *k* as the case may be. *C*, taken by itself, has no reality; and, except so far as its sounds are those of *k* or *s* it has no relations to any other letters. On the other hand, however, the relations of *k* and *s* are those of *c* also: and we shall now see that these are numerous. *K* has its congeners, and so has *s*, so that each forms part of a system.

Herein, *k* stands to *g* (as in *gate*), as *p* stands to *b*, and as *t* to *d*.⁽⁴⁾

But *p* and *b*, *t* and *d* have, respectively, and as pairs, certain relations to *f*, *v* and *th* (both in *thin* and *thine*). Such relations, also, have *k* and *g* to a specific pair of sounds, to which they stand, each to each, as *p* to *f*, and *b* to *v*, etc. These sounds are not found in the English language: neither are they the sounds of the so-called gutturals *ch* and *gh*. What they are will soon be seen.

The *P*-series, as we may conveniently call it, runs through *v* into *w*, and thence, into *u* and the *broad* vowels.

The *K*-series runs, through the two un-English sounds, into *y*, and thence, into *i* and the small vowels.

More than this, the aspirate *h* is allied to both *k* and *g*. In English, then, we have the sequence *ha*, *ka*, *ga*, (—), (—), and *ya*; allied sounds. They are five in number; and, if we had the analogues of *f* and *v*, they would amount to seven. Now every member of this group shares with *k* its tendency to change according to the character of the sounds with which it comes into contact.

S stands alone as little as *k*; being part of the series *sa*, *sha*, *za*, *zha*.

Followed by *y*, *s* and *z* have a tendency to become *sh* and *zh*; as *syoor*=*shure*, *zyoor*=*zhure*. This is common in English, though the spelling conceals it. *U*, however, in *sure*, and *z* in *azure*, are sounded *yoo*. *K*+*y*, and *g*+*y* have a tendency to become *ksh* and *gzh*. This, however, is not well exemplified in English; though the change is so important that it will command much of our attention in the sequel. *T*+*y* has a tendency to become *tsh*. The *u* in *nature*=*yoo*, and the sound is *na-tshur*.

D+*y* has a tendency (though not so strong as it was in the preceding instance) to become *dzh* (or *j*). The diphthong *ew*, when pronounced *yoo*, gives us not unfrequently the sound *jew* for *dew*. This is a vulgarism; but the allied change in *nature* is very good English, or if not, the change by which it is brought about is a genuine process of language in general, and not a peculiarity of any one dialect or language in particular.

Such, then, is the basis in philology of the changes which the sound of *k* may undergo, and of the extent to which an adequate or inadequate, accurate or inaccurate, representation of them by letters may affect the orthography of a language. It is manifest that in

4. Here, as elsewhere, there is sacrifice to conciseness. *K*, *g*, or *p*, etc., means the sound of *k*, *g*, or *p*, etc.

k and *s*, taken separately, we have the elements of a series of changes which may extend itself to more than half the consonants of the alphabet; a change which, without any additional elements of disorder is one of vast magnitude.

For the orthographical expression of this the one thing needful is simplicity and singleness of purpose; by which I mean an absolute neglect of every secondary aim: such as that of indicating the history or origin of a word as well as its sound. The simple representation of this would tax the resources of the very best of alphabets. For anything beyond—anything in the way of etymology, a price must be paid, and the little that is gained on the one hand is more than counterbalanced by a loss on the other.

If *k* and *s*, then, even when they stand alone, create difficulties; what will it be when a third letter, *c*, is introduced (so to say) between them; and, with no definite power of its own, is sometimes the equivalent of the former, sometimes of the latter? It will represent each of them in their numerous relations to the other members of the sound-system; and, in doing it, it will just become a letter of more importance than all the others of the alphabet put together. I do not wish to have either the credit or the contrary, of deducing that enormous amount of disorder and confusion which is the undoubted opprobrium of the English system of spelling, from any single cause; or, indeed, from a few causes. I have no ambition of showing that everything which the orthographical reformers complain of is the misfortune rather than the fault of our alphabet, which if it had not been derived so exclusively from the Latin, and if the speakers of that language had not been so prejudiced against the letter *k*, would have been a very tolerable one. Least of all do I imagine that by simply ejecting *c*, or by using it with a change of import, the thousand-and-one chronic and complicated evils of our orthography would be dispelled. All I pretend to indicate is the extent to which a single letter may contain within itself the faults and demerits of many. This means that having dealt with the power of *k* and *s* as *sounds*, we have now to consider *c* as a *letter*; by which, under certain conditions, sometimes the one, and sometimes the other of the two is represented.

SECTION XXVII.

THE SUBSTITUTION OF *C* FOR *K*—*O* AS A LETTER.

We shall see, to some extent, what *c* is as a letter by contrasting it with any of the ordinary ones, let us say with *b*. *B* is *b* always and everywhere. It is this at both the beginning and the middle of *Babel*. It is this at both the beginning and the end of *blab*. Having nothing to do with what it either precedes or follows, it is always a self-sustained and self-supporting letter,—just what a letter should be. The most that can be said against it is, that it is some-

times silent, as in *subtle*, and *debtor*. Even here, however, it is either *b* or nothing : in other words it has nothing equivocal or ambiguous about it. *C*, on the contrary, is nothing of the kind. It depends on its place and its relations for its power : the letter with which it may best be compared being *q*.

Q, if we take it as we find it, as a mere letter in the alphabet, (spelt *cue*,) is nothing as a part of a word. Its power, as such, depends upon what follows : and it is always followed by *u*. This is, perhaps, the only rule in English spelling to which there is no exception. *Q*, then, is no genuine letter. It is merely a part of a combination. But it is scarcely even this. The *u* must be followed by a vowel. We can pronounce *queen*, or *quick* ; but we cannot pronounce *gun*, or *quck*. *Q* then is not exactly *q + u*. It is rather *q* plus half of *u*. Should this seem a piece of over-refinement, the main fact still stands out conspicuously. *Q* is no self-sustained and self-supporting letter. It is a part of a sign which depends upon what follows it.

And so it is with *c*, though, of course, with a difference of detail. *C*, by itself, is nothing ; or, what is much the same, it is one of two things. Followed by *a*, *o*, or *u* (a broad vowel) or by a consonant, it is *k*. Followed by a narrow, slender, or small vowel, that is, by *e*, *i*, or *y*, it is *s*. It is nothing when it stands alone ; nothing without its determinant. *C*, writes Johnson, " has no determinate sound—and never ends a word," a statement which has been enlarged on by Nares in his *Orthoepy*, and by Todd who criticises Nares. Nares, after remarking that Johnson reduces his own theory to practice, and always writes *frantick*, *musick*, etc., suggests that the better reason is to be found in the old habit of writing *e* at the end of words as *sticke*, *blocke*, and *musicke*. But this does not account for the final *e* itself. In words of French origin it may be attributed to the *e* mute. In words of Anglo-Saxon origin it may be the sign of the dative case in substantives ; or it may represent the *-an* of the definite adjective ; for the adjective in the language of Alfred and Ælfric ended in *-an* when it was preceded by the definite article ; a point of great importance in the reading of Chaucer. This became *-en*, and later still *e*. Eventually it became mute : but not till after the time of Chaucer. Still there was no final *e* in the nominative case, and in many other situations ; so that, when it is found here, it must be considered as the extension, by a false analogy, of the sign of the dative termination. However, Nares writes, " As long as that vowel retained any sound, its regular effect, without the intervention of *k*, would have been the softening of the *c*, even if doubled." Hence, he finds in *ck* " a compromise between the sound and etymology." Nevertheless, the principle, as he ventures to prophecy, is not destined to stand against the power of custom ; so that he approves the forms *demoniac*, *prosaic*, *music*, *antic*, etc. The longer the word the sooner the change will prevail ; because in monosyllables, like *stick*, *sick*, etc., where

"a single letter forms the fourth or fifth part of a word, the eye is not easily reconciled to the loss of the *k*." He, then, gives a list of dissyllables,—*arrac*, *barrack*, *haddock*, *paddock*, etc., observing that most of them end in *-ock*; and that in trisyllables the *k* is wholly dropped; compounds like *candlestick*, *laughingstock*, *planetstruck*, etc., being, so far as the final *s* is concerned, monosyllabic. This, upon the whole, is sound criticism; and, what is more, the remarks are suggestive. When Nares tells us that Johnson kept his own rule in practice, he tells us something of the extent to which the lexicographer wrote as a logician rather than as a philologist. He is uniform in the use of the *k* after the *c* in words like "frantick, musick, comick," and the like. The practice, of course, was what he found, but he applied it consistently. As a scholar, however, he did it with his eyes open. He well knew the valid philological reasons against it. He knew that, whether derived directly or not from the Latin, the words, as members of a class, were radically, fundamentally, and originally Greek. He knew that *-ic* was a Greek formative. He knew that, as the representative of a Greek sound, *k* was the right and *c* the wrong sign or letter. He knew that the *i* was short; and that, on both Greek and Latin principles, the fact of its being followed by two consonants would make it long by position. Yet, for all this, he used the two letters; one of which was a Greek one. It is impossible to say that he may not have thought that this was the best method of showing that the *i* was short: and that if he had written "comic, music," etc., the words might have been read "comeek, museec;" a danger by no means imaginary; inasmuch as the *French* (Latin at second, and Greek at third, hand) orthography gave us "*comique* and *musique*." All this, I say, he *may* have thought. He appears, however, to have acted (as has been suggested) on the logical principle. If *c* has no *determinate* sound of its own, and if the doctrine to that effect is to be of general application, it must *always* be followed by something—even at the end of a word: since *c* without a following is *c* without a determinant. Hence, even when not wanted, something must be tacked on to it: so that, when final or followed by nothing, it must not be allowed to exist. This seems to me to have been Johnson's principle. At present, however, we write "music, comic, frantic," and the like; having so far departed from Johnson's rule, as inferred from his language and practice (for we do not find it *totidem verbis*), as to treat *c* when followed by *nothing*, as if it were followed by a broad vowel, *i.e.*, as *k*. *K*, then, we may consider to be its natural sound; as is, doubtless, the case.

I have called Nares's views suggestive; and the remark which has just been criticised suggests Johnson's way of looking at the question; and the opinion of Johnson is no small matter. We should do our best to see what it rests on; especially when, as in the case before us, his practice has been set aside. It is just possible that if some timid innovator, from the north of the Tweed, or from the sis-

ter island, had ventured to suggest that the simple *c* best preserved the etymology, and had received for an answer some such sentence as, "Nonsense sir; clear your head of cant, sir; you don't see your way, sir; *c* has no determinate power as a letter, sir, and when there is no determinant there is no letter for you to talk about;" and if such an answer had come down in the pages of Boswell, we might be writing "*musick*," and "*comick*," and "*frantick*," and what not, at the present moment. It is not what is right or wrong, but what certain men choose to say about them that (for a time at least) determines greater events than the use of *c* at the end of a word.

In his remarks on the combination *ck* at the end of a monosyllable, Nares saw something beyond the mere fact of the word in which it occurred being a short one. A vowel followed by a single consonant *looks* longer than one followed by two; inasmuch as it constitutes a larger part of the syllable. In *tic* or *tik* the *i* is one-third of the whole combination; in *tick* it is a fourth. It is only to the reader that it does this, and it is only to the eye that the difference is made sensible. To the ear, *tic*, *tik*, and *tick* are identical. It is to the eye, however, to which spelling, writing, or orthography, addresses itself; and in the investigation of the origin of the practice of indicating the shortness of the vowel by doubling the consonant which follows, the *visible* relation of a vowel to the remainder of the syllable is a very important consideration. Whether Nares's suggestion applies to the particular words under notice is another question.

Unfortunately for the reader the question is one on which there is much more to be said. It is necessary, however, to put the real conditions of it in their true form. There *is* something—indeed, there is a great deal—in Nares's distinction between monosyllables and the longer words. It is referable, however, to another class of facts. As a general rule the monosyllables and dissyllables in *c* or *k* belong to different languages, and are amenable to different rules in the way of grammar. As a general rule, the monosyllables are English; and as a universal rule they are radical, fundamental, or (if we prefer the term) crude, forms: or in other words, they have no secondary elements attached to them. Yet to the attachment of such elements they are pre-eminently liable. The commonest of these are *ish* and *y* for adjectives; *ing* (as in the present participle) for verbs. Now these three begin with a small vowel, and they constitute, with a few more, nearly the whole class. It follows then that if *bleak* or *break* be converted into "*bleak-ish*" or "*break-ing*," etc, and be spelt with a simple *c*, they run the risk of being read "*bleas-ish*, *breas-ing*;" whereas if they be written "*bleack*," or "*breack*," we have a conflict between the two opposing principles; of that by which we indicate the *longness* of a vowel by either doubling it or combining it with another, and that by which we indicate its shortness by doubling the consonant which follows it. When the vowel is actually short we must, perforce, do this, hence "*thick*, *thick-ish*."

The words of more than one syllable however, are, as a rule, of Latin or Greek origin, and the second syllable is non-radical : as (for example,) "com-ic," the adjectival derivative of *κῶμη*. Here, then, we have the adjective ready made : and the only danger that lies before us is that of a secondary affix being required which shall begin with *i* or *e*. Such would be the comparative or superlative degree ; "comic-er, comic-est ;" wherein there is a danger of their being sounded as *s*. The danger, however, is unreal. We abstain from such comparatives and superlatives. We eschew them. We ignore them. We say "*more comic*," or "*most comic*," instead. The degrees of comparison, however, are not the rocks on which we may possibly split. From every adjective we may get an adverb to match. What if it begin with a small vowel ? The danger threatens us again. But the sign of the English adverb does *not* so begin. It is the affix *ly* ; so that we may say if we like, *comically* ; and that without fear of risks. But we do not, though we may, do this. We say "*comic-ally* ;" taking as our basis, not the actual Greek form *κῶμικος*, but the possible Latin form *comicalis* ; a form which may or may not exist.

There is nothing to fear then, in letting *dissyllables* end in *c*, but a great deal to fear in letting *monosyllables* do so.

It is scarcely necessary to guard the reader against taking the last statement at more than it is worth. It is, in no respect, a defence of the *c* in words like "comic" in general. It neither states nor hints that *c* is as good a letter as *k*. All that it means is, that "comic" is a better spelt word than "comick:" and the illustration it supplies is one of the text of Nares exclusively. *C* is better than *ck*. This is what applies to the particular question under notice ; and it applies to nothing else directly. So far as it has any secondary application it must be taken with what accompanies it, and with much of what will follow it. It is an instance of what is required if the short-comings of the present manner of spelling are to be made good by the exposition of rules. That they are reducible to rules is admitted. But the rules themselves, even in the most compendious expositions, would take up more space than the whole of the rest of the grammar. Neither are they either applicable or intelligible without much previous knowledge of a wide and discursive character. Hence, when we get them, the only students whom they help are those to whom help is superfluous. So far, however, as the exposition of the complex and unmanageable character of the system of orthographic expedients goes—a system which first gives us *c* in place of *k* for the sake of indicating a fact in etymology, and then an artificial combination to prevent it being sounded like *s*, and then a host more of the same kind,—we are far from the end of it. When the vowel is *short*, as in *thick*, we must use two letters ; since either "*thic-ish*" or "*thik-ish*" would run the risk of being sounded "*thikeish*." Akin to this are words like "*convoke*," "*provoke*," etc., where there is but one vowel and that a *long* one. Write

"convok" (or "convoc") "provok" (or "provoc") and the length of the vowel is uncertain. The result is the choice of certain expedients. You may double the *o*; but the *o* so doubled has every chance of being sounded as *ū*. You may prefix an *a* as in "coal;" and so get "provoak," a form which has actually existed, though now obsolete. "Provoke," etc., has superseded it; so that it and its congeners stand, at the present moment, as monuments of the vitality, usefulness, and indispensability of the irrepressible *k*.

Naturam expellas furcā, tamen usque recurret.

You may, however, take refuge in *q*, and after the French fashion, write "provoque." There are plenty of expedients. The best use, however, we can put them to, is to leave them alone—to make ourselves independent of them. The real remedy for complications of this kind is the sign for a short vowel, as opposed to a long one.

This relative or conditional power of *c* is a fact which affects other languages besides the English: indeed, the disposition to use it at the expense of *k* is no genuine characteristic of any German language. Taken by ourselves we have no prejudice against *k*. When we avoid it, it is because Latin influences have warped our natural impartiality. The extent, however, of this predilection for one letter, combined with the eschewal of the other, will show that, in some cases, at least, it has not been in favor with the etymological, derivational, or historic principle in spelling. In some languages the rule that *c* before a broad vowel, is *k*, and before a small one *s*, is absolute, or nearly so: so that "can, con," or "cun," is always "kan, kon," or "kun," and "cen, cin," or "cyn," always "sen, sin," or "syn." When this is the case all goes smoothly. But sometimes *c* before *a* is sounded as *s*, and sometimes before *i* or *e* as *k*. We have seen what comes of this in the French. In order to spell *sa* with a *c*, recourse is had to the cedilla "ç:" and in order to spell *ki* at all, nothing short of *qu* will suffice, as in *qui, quitter*, etc.

Such is our notice of *c* so far as it displaces *k*. But it also does the same with *s*, though only exceptionally, accidentally, and in a few cases. The words which illustrate this change fall into two small classes:—

1. Those like "once" and "whence."

2. Those like "mice" and "pence." Each of these divisions is subdivided.

1. (a) *Once, twice*, and *thrice* are simply misspelt forms of *ones, twies*, and *thries*, the ordinary genitive or possessive cases of *one, two*, and *three*. In syntax they are of course adverbs, but adverbs originating in cases have long been recognised. "Unawares, towards, backwards, needs," (of necessity, as in "Needs must go when the devil drives,") are words of the same class.

(b) In like manner "whence, hence," and "thence" are from "whennes" (or "whannes"), "hennes" and "thennes," the only difference between them and "once," etc., being that the numerals

are derived from the root itself; the words denoting direction in place from a previous case—*when*, *hen*, and *then*.

2. (a) In *mice* and *lice*, the plurals of *mouse* and *louse*, the *s* which the *c* represents is not the *s* of "fathers, books," etc., i.e., not the *s* which stands as the sign of the plural number. The plural, or rather collective, character of the form is denoted by the *i*, or rather by the change of vowel in general: the *c* is the *s* of the root.

(b) In "*dice*" and "*pence*" the origin of the *c* is different, for it is the sign of the plural or collective number, as truly as if the words were written *dyes* and *pennies*.

The explanation of this substitution of *c* for *s* is not very distant. If the words under notice, after the loss of the vowel *e*, etc., were spelt in the ordinary manner, i.e. as *on's*, *two's*, *three's*, *when's*, *hen's*, *then's*, *lyes*, *myes*, *dyes*, and *penns*, they would run the chance of being pronounced *on'z*, *two'z*, *threez*, *whenz*, *penz*, *thenz*, *lyez*, *myez*, *dyez*, and *pennz*, like the sound, though not the spelling, of *boys*, *hens*, and a whole host of other words. Now *c* suggests no such confusion. But *c* standing alone is either *k* or nothing. To fit it, then, for doing duty, the mute *e* is appended, the result being that *-ce* spells *s*.

The result of all this is manifest. The true pronunciation of the adverbs and the first two plurals is preserved, while *dice* and *pence* are, respectively, differentiated from *dyes* (for coining) and *pennies*: in other words, a collective rather than plural form is developed. Such being the results, we infer from them something like conscious contrivance on the part of some one; yet so dark is the history of it that we are almost tempted to look upon it as the growth of language itself, working through some such abstraction as the soul, spirit, or organic force of its orthography: in other words, some such an abstraction as an orthography without orthographists.

Now if this unnecessary use of *-c-* were abolished, it would not rise to the dignity of a Phonetic reform. On the other hand, it would be something better than the mere correction of a blunder. Upon ordinary principles the spelling is defensible: inasmuch as, upon ordinary principles, the only objection to it is that it is an unnecessary expenditure of power. As it happens, *se* would have done as well; for *onse*, *whense*, and *mise*, would have been pronounced like *geese*; in which the *s* retains its true power. We do not call *geese* *geeze*, nor should we call *mise* *mize*.

Most of these forms may be condemned at once, simply on the ground of being unnecessary and gratuitous. But we may go further, and denounce them as violations of the etymological system. This, however, at the first view, we are forbidden to do; for of that system we are the impugnors rather than the upholders. Be it so. We denounce them, nevertheless, as blunders; as violations of the system to which they are meant to be subservient. But this is not all. It is not pretended that the etymological principle is an evil in itself. On the contrary, if out of two ways of spelling a word pho-

netically, one will give us the etymology as well as the sound, the one which does so is the better of the two : the only condition being that nothing in the way of Phonesis be sacrificed to it. With the words under notice, however, there is not only a sacrifice, but an unnecessary one ; indeed one which, according to its own principles, has a tendency to mislead us. " Whose " stands for the genitive, or possessive case of *who* : the real spelling, according to existing principles, is " *who's* " or (perhaps) " *whoes* : " for ' *s* ' is the sign of the genitive case all the world over, and it is, to say the least, a very strange etymology to spell as if it ended in *e*.

When *c* before a small vowel is preceded by *s*, the combination, so far as its sound is concerned, is simply that of *ss*, which is that of *s* singly. *Sciatica*, *science*, *sciolist*, etc., may, as *sounds*, be spelt with *s* alone, or *c* alone : i.e. either *ciatica*, *cience*, *ciolist*, or *siatica*, *sience*, *siolist*. The function of *c*, however, is to suggest the Latin or Greek origin of the words ; though when the word is *directly* from the Greek it is out of place. The pronunciation here is pretty regular ; indeed when the word is actually Latin, as in *scire facias*, *scintilla*, etc., the *c* is silent. The second letter, no matter whether *c* or *s*, is merely a superfluity ; and its presence is noted simply because it gives us a piece of etymological spelling with a *minimum* sacrifice of the primary object of orthography. It is an example of the combination of the two principles in its most harmless form : and as such it has been recognized. Even here, however, it involves the necessity of a rule. Is *sc* always equal to *s* ? Only before the small vowels. We can do nothing, then, without a qualification ; nothing even in the least obnoxious of combinations.

This, then, though the simplest and the most innocent of all the agents in the etymological system, requires a preliminary statement of certain conditions before it can be put into operation. But, even here, there are complications. It is only in the more modern orthography that this uniformity is preserved. When *skeleton* was spelt with a *c*, as it was in the days of men who were scholars as well as anatomists, and who knew that it came from the Greek word *σκελος*, as well as they knew the names of the bones of which it was composed, there was a notable difference between the powers of the first two letters. At that time *c* was sounded as *k* ; and the foregoing rule was inoperative ; or, at least, had a certain exception to it ; a fact which makes it no rule at all. However, the men who used the word kept up the connexion with the Greek, not by the means, but in spite, of the orthography ; and now the *k* has come out in its proper form. The mathematicians held less closely to the tradition and the etymology : and an *isosceles* is called an *i-sosceles* triangle. Yet both the name of the triangle, and the name of the bony framework of the body, come from the same source. It is, probably, by the association of ideas as determined by the identity of subject-matter that *skull*, originally *scull*, is now spelt with a *k*. It would be difficult to reduce this to a rule of any practical value. The

reason for it—a very different matter—has perhaps been suggested. At any rate, it gives us another instance of the irrepressibility of *k*.

SECTION XXVIII.

THE SUBSTITUTION OF *C* FOR *K* CONTINUED—*C* AS THE ELEMENT OF A DIGRAPH.

It is now time to consider *c* as the element of a digraph. Followed by *h* it gives us the combination *ch* as in *churl*, *chest*, *each*, etc. In *pitch*, *itch*, etc., it has exactly the same sound; though preceded by a *t*; in other words the combinations *ch* and *tch* are pronounced alike. In *witch* as opposed to *which*, the *t* serves to distinguish the name of a female wizard from that of the relative pronoun. In *pitch*, etc., we have no such differentiation.

In expressing the sound under notice by a combination of letters rather than by a single sign no harm is done, and no error committed: for there is no doubt as to its double character. For the *c* in "*witch*" write *s* and the real elements present themselves: viz., *tsh*, giving *tshest* for *chest*, *tshurl* for *churl*, and *eatsh* for *each*. For the digraph *sh* substitute a single sign and the word is spelt properly. It is only, however, in one language of the class under notice that this can be done; for there is only one in which *sh* is expressed by a single letter; that being the Magyar or Hungarian. Here *t* has its ordinary power; while *s* = *sh*. Hence *ts* = *tsh*, or the *tch* in *witch*. On the other hand, in German, where the equivalent to the English *sh* is *sch*, the combination runs up to four letters, and what we write *Dutch* appears in the fuller form *Deutsch*. In French, where *sh* is written *ch*, the combination *tch* is rare; indeed, it is only found in foreign words. When found, however, it represents the sound under notice. In Dutch and Swedish it is spelt *tj*; so that we may safely say not only that the real elements are *t* and *sh*, but that the *t* element, at least, is pretty generally recognized.

If this be the case why is it in Russian, and in more phonetic alphabets than one, treated as a single sound, and expressed by a single sign—*Щ* in Russian, and *Č*, *ç* in the alphabet of the *Phonetic Journal*? The answer to this is part of a more general question than the one now under notice: and for the discussion of this it is reserved. All that is of present importance is the analysis of the combination, and the recognition of the sound of *t* as its chief element. It is *tsh* beyond doubt: though whether it should be treated as *tsh*, a single sound, or as *t* + *sh*, two sounds, is not so indubitable.

If such be the case, what, in the digraph *ch*, is represented by the *c*, and what by the *h*? Place for place, *c* = *t*; and place for place, *h* = *sh* or its equivalent. The connexion on either side is obscure. A connexion, however, actually exists, though it lies somewhat far back. It is founded upon a fact of generality in *language*, and not upon a mere arbitrary orthography.

Let us remember what often happens in words like *kind*, *kin*, *cow*, and others, where the sound of *k* is followed by a vowel. There are few of us who have not heard some one among our acquaintance insert the sound *y*, and say *kyind*, *kyin*, *kyow* and the like. Public men, especially on the stage, indulge in the practice, and *Punch*, with his fraternity, has more than once bantered them for doing so.

Now when once this habit has fairly set-in, and spread itself over a considerable portion of a language, a further change takes place, and the sound of *y* becomes that of *sh*. Hence, words like *kyind*, *kyow*, etc., become *kshind*, *kshow*. That this, at present, is a very rare combination in English is manifest: indeed we can scarcely get it at all without picking the *c* out of one syllable and the *sh* out of another: as is sometimes done with *election* = *el-ek-shun*. In the Sanskrit, where one letter is thus sounded, *election* thus dissected (*ele-kshun*) is, in more than one grammar at least, the word which supplies the example.

The best, however, are to be found in the Scandinavian; not, however, the Danish of Denmark: though in the Danish of both Denmark and Norway the combination *kj* (= *ky*, or *cy*) is common—indeed conspicuously so. Its power, however, varies with the language.

There is not much room for rules here; nor, perhaps, much need of them; inasmuch as the words themselves thus spelt are not numerous; and, as such, may be learned in detail as easily as through the comprehension of a principle; the inculcation of which has never been, and apparently never will be, a favorite method with teachers. Nevertheless, the character of the combination is worth a short notice, the power attached to it being two-fold. The analysis, of course, gives us the sound of *s* + that of *ch*. But *ch* has, at least, two sounds, that of the *ch* in “*patriarch*,” and that of the *ch* in “*chest*,” the former being that of the simple *k*, the latter that of *t* + *sh*. Now as the *ch* which is sounded *k*, is held to represent the Greek X *Khi* (*Chi*, *χ*) it is fair to suppose that, to those at least who know Greek, the true pronunciation will present itself both naturally and uniformly; and such, indeed, is to a great extent, the fact. Words, however, like “*archbishop*,” tell us that even here there are exceptions. Saving these, however, we may see our way to something like a rule: and we know how to pronounce the word *school*. We may, indeed, congratulate ourselves in keeping closer to the Greek than the Germans, who sound it *skool*; though, like ourselves, they spell with a *ch* = *schule*. It is only, however, when the vowel is broad (*a*, *o*, *u*) that this pronunciation prevails. What is the practice when the vowel is a small or slender one,—when it is *e*, or *i*, or *y*? At the first view of this question it seems an easy matter to say that, in such a position, the sound of *k* disappears, and that the original rule as to the sound of *c* before a small vowel re-asserts itself, and takes its course; so that whatever else the digraph *ch* may denote under other conditions, it denotes nothing at all here.

It stands in the spelling, no doubt, but it has no orthographical function whatsoever; indeed, it addresses itself to the eye only, and to the eye it suggests a connection with the Greek letter X χ (*Chi*, *Khi*). If to this statement any explanation of the principle upon which the combination *sk* (spelt *sch*) when followed by a broad vowel is stable, whereas when followed by a small one, it is variable or evanescent, could be added, something like a rule, something indeed like a principle, would be arrived at.

The example by which this doctrine is illustrated is, of course, the word *schism*, with its derivatives *schismatic* and *schismatical*: and it is amply sufficient for an illustration. But will it give us a rule? Certainly not. The word *scheme* tells us this. The very most that *schism* gives us is a rule for the sound of *sch* before the particular vowel *i*. It is no rule for its power in other combinations. It is not even a rule for the small vowels; since it will not even apply to the *e* in *scheme*. How, then, does *ch* preceded by *s* comport itself? In *schism* it is simply ejected. When and under what conditions does it take its place? If it keep its place, what will be its power? If it disappear will it go alone, or will it carry with it the *h* by which it is followed?

In respect to the first part of the question, it may be said at once, that it will not retain its ordinary sound of *tsh*; though there is no very cogent reason why it should not do so. *Stshool*, and *stsholar* are, by no means, unpronounceable words; and although it is the practice in the English language to eschew the combination of the simple and compound sibilants, it is common enough in Russian, Polish, and their congeners of the Slavonic family. The German forms of speech, however, avoid the combination. This is well illustrated by the Swedish, where the combination *tj* is sounded *tsh*. In words, however, like *stjerna* = *star*, where it is preceded by *s*, the obnoxious combination presents itself: the result being that the three letters are pronounced like the English *sh*, that is, *stjerna* = *sherne*. It is not easy to say what has really been the fate of the *tj* in this change. It has not vanished wholly. If it had, the word would be sounded *serne*. It has not been changed into an *h*; for the *h* itself would be a piece of cacography. Somehow or other it has converted the sound of the first consonant, *s*, into that of the first in *shire*, and that is all that can be said about it. Such is the process in the Swedish; and it is to a certain extent a double one. It gives the sound of *sh*, but it might also give us the simple *s*. It may be, indeed, that such is actually the case; for it is quite possible that the practice of the Swedish language is not uniform, and that sometimes *stj* may develop *sh* and sometimes *s*. If so, it is so much the worse for those who learn to read Swedish; in other words, there is one complexity more; and the orthography is, *pro tanto*, the worse for it. However, in the Swedish this is *not* the case: so that in Swedish the reader who can spell out the sound of *stjerna* can spell out that of the words like it. Is this the case in English? The rule itself is

not unlike the Swedish one. In pronouncing *schism* and *schismatic* as *sizm* and *sizmatic* we ignore the *h* and sound the *sc* as in *scissors*. But does this establish a rule? We have seen that it fails to do this with *scheme* where the *ch* = *k*. Will these two words between them give us a rule; that is, will *scheme* tell us the power of *sche* wherever it may occur? We naturally expect that it will. But it will not. What do we learn from the word *schedule*? We certainly learn that the power of *sch* is very variable. The ordinary pronunciation gives, I believe, *shedule*; but both *skedule* after the manner of *scheme* and *seddule* have their supporters. *Schist*, a geological term, and as such, one of recent introduction, is certainly sounded *shist*; though, as in *schism*, the *ch* is followed by *i*. It is probable that the time at which the particular word was introduced into our language, the language from which it was *directly* and *immediately* taken, and the class of speakers who first approved and promulgated it, have more to do with the particular power which this unmanageable combination assumes, than anything relating to the constitution of the language itself. These, however, are just the conditions which it is most difficult to reduce to rule.

SECTION XXIX.

THE SUBSTITUTION OF *C* FOR *K* CONTINUED.—THE PARALLELISM BETWEEN *C* AND *G*, *CH* AND *J*.

Having hitherto treated *c* in its capacity of a substitute for *k*, as a single letter, we have said as much as is required concerning it; and, evidently, we have said a great deal. And we can see the reason why. We can see that if *c* had never come into the alphabet at all, a great many complexities and contrivances would have been avoided. We may believe that if it had come in concurrently with *k*, some of these might have been avoided. We may see, moreover, that either with *k* or without *k*, it would have been less effective, for bad, if it had been admitted without any reference to its use in indicating the connection of words like *city*, etc., with *civitas*, etc., that is, made subservient to the secondary object of etymology.

We have seen, however, that neither *k* nor *s* stands alone; and, also, that the nearest congeners of *k* are *g* and *z* respectively. Of these the former most especially commands our attention, because, to a certain extent, its history is parallel to that of *c*, and in certain points of detail, diverges from it. Both *c* and *g*, however, change their sound according to the broadness or slenderness of the vowel which follows them. The change, however, of *c* is the more constant. In *gig* and *gibberish* for instance, the *g* is sounded as in *gun*. Again, *c* as we know, changes to *s* (*city* = *sity*), and if the parallelism were perfect *g* would become *z*. On the contrary, however, it becomes *t* or *dz*, which I hold to be the same in both cases. With

this we must compare *tsh*, or the sound of the *ch* in *chest*. And here I hold that the changes in the two cases run parallel :

1. *Ka, kya, ksha, tsha.*

2. *Ga, gya, gza, dzha.*

Now, I am not at present investigating the actual history of either of the English sounds *ch* or *j*. I am merely indicating the extent to which the sounds of *k* and *g* are affected by the character of the vowel by which they are succeeded. Each gives birth to a compound sibilant; and, I believe, each, when it does this, goes through the same sequence of changes : by which I mean that every *k* which ends in becoming *tsh* has been, during the process of transformation, both *ky* and *ksh*; and that every *g* in like manner becomes, in the first instance, *gy*, and in the second, *gzh*. I do not, however, hold that every *tsh* and every *dzsh* have been originally *k* and *g* respectively, inasmuch as they can be developed out of *t* and *d* as independent roots. For instance :

1. *Ta, tya, tsha.*

2. *Da, dya, dzha.*

Now we have *tsh*'s and *dzsh*'s of both kinds in English, but they are treated very differently in our orthography. The sound given to *u*, *yoo*, and *ew*, after *t* and *d* as in *nature*, *verdure*, *dew*, when pronounced *natshur*, *verdzhur*, and *dzheuw*, has already been noticed. That this is condemned as a vulgarism I admit. I may also add that, according to the information of Mr Pitman, who, from having exhibited the so-called vulgarism phonetically, and subsequently recognised the ordinary pronunciation, is a good authority on the matter, the practice of so sounding the combination is on the decrease—perhaps passing away altogether. It may be so. It is possible that with so many of us reading and writing and cultivating our pronunciation, the influence of the orthoepists may succeed in checking the tendency to change; and if they do this they will, to some small extent, have succeeded in what is called the fixation of some part of the language. I do not care to prophecy upon this point. I only know that *ka* and *ga*, *ta* and *da* at the beginning of the series, and that *tsha* and *dzha* at the end, are, comparatively speaking, stable combinations; and that *ky* and *ksh*, *gy* and *gzh*, *ty* and *dy*, in the middle, are, comparatively speaking, remarkably unstable ones. If then, I were to prophecy at all, it would be in favor of the vulgar pronunciation eventually winning. Hitherto, however, the compound sibilants, (the *ch*'s and *j*'s,) which have arisen out of *t* and *d*, have been left alone; indeed we may say that their claim to a spelling of their own has been ignored. The existence, however, of two converging series of phonetic processes by which we get a double origin for our compound sibilants should be recognised. Thus much, however, may probably be said with safety, and to the credit of *ch* and *j*, namely, that wherever we find them we may assume that the original simple consonants out of which they were developed were *k* and *g*, not *t* or *d*.

The lines, however, which we have just traced are, by no means, the only ones. From the sound of *k* we get that of *s*, simply. From that of *g* we get, in an equally simple form, the sound of *z*. In their tendencies to undergo this kind of change the two sounds vary. *Both*, as we have seen, pass into the compound sibilants, *tsk* and *dzk*. *K*, however, passes into *s* as well. *G*, on the other hand, has no such tendency to become *z*. There is want, then, of parallelism here. It can, however, be explained. *G* has an affinity which *s* has not; one which attracts it in another direction. The tendencies of *g*, when they are not towards *dzk*, are towards *y*, (*ga*, *ya*).

With this view of the phonesis it is mere surplusage to condemn the use of *ch* and *j* on philosophical grounds. One of them is a digraph; the other a single letter; and it is impossible that both can be right. Each, indeed, may be wrong.

C enters into the composition of both our compendiums *x* and *q*; and, in each, it is brought in comparison with *g*. Of *x*, the sound is that of *ks* or *gz*, as the case may be. At the beginning of syllables, where it is found in only a few words, such as *Xenophon*, *Xerxes*, *Xylography*, it is sounded as *z*. The charge of ambiguity against a compendium like *x*, is a grave one. *Ks* we can understand, and *gz* we can understand, when they are written separately. *X*, too, as a single sign, we can understand when we know that it represents either *ks* or *gz* exclusively. But we cannot understand it when it sometimes stands for the one, and sometimes for the other. And this is what *x* does in English. The action and re-action between *c* and *g* is shown in the words which end in *ue*, as "*antique*," and "*unique*" on the one side, and "*rogue*" or "*prorogue*" on the other. The *qu* in these combinations represents *cu*; so that the two forms run parallel. The use of these forms is purely conventional, artificial, and *non-natural*; especially that in which *g* appears. It is, also, as far as our own language is concerned, of French origin. The precedent was established by the forms in *c(q)*; which in words like *loquor*, *liquor*, and others, belonging to the Latin language, seem to have represented a real sound, seem to have had a basis in reality; and the words just quoted may have been sounded nearly as they are spelt. The same was, probably, the case with the *gu* in *anguis*. Still, the *g* was separable from the *u*; which the *q* was not. The tendency of this was to invest *qu* with the character of a single letter when it preceded a small vowel as in *que*, *qui*, (*ke*, *ki*); with that of the combination *cw* when followed by a broad one, as in *quoi*, *quand*, etc. This, again, is an assertion of the old law, by which the character of the subsequent vowel, determines the power, or import, of *c*. One step more, however, is wanted, before the parallelism between the final *c* and the final *qu* becomes complete. This is a determinant, like the *k* in "*frantick*," as it has been explained in Section 25. It has no sound of its own; but it fixes the sound of the consonant which precedes. The mute *e* does this; making words like "*antique*," "*prologue*," etc., sound as if they ended in *-ic*, *-og*. At the same time

the combination indicated the longness of the vowel. Such is the history of the terminations *-ogue* and *-ique*. *Mutatis mutandis*, it is that of *-ogue* and *-ique* (*intrigue*) also.

Now this we may take as the typical instance of what we have called an orthographical expedient; a remedy for, or a palliation of, some fundamental deviation from the plain straightforward line of phonetic representation. I do not think that the word non-natural is too strong a term for such manœuvres or manipulations. There are, doubtless, expedients and expedients: there are expedients of different degrees of conventionalism, artificiality, or non-naturalness. Of these the combination *sc*, may, possibly, be the most innocent. The forms in *que* and *gue* are certainly the least so. One merit, indeed, they possess. They are un-English. They are French. So that we got them ready-made; and when we have said this in their favor we have said all. Let us measure the non-naturalness of the combinations before us. If any rule in phonetic spelling be thorough-going, it is that the number of syllables should, in no case, exceed the number of vowels. The diphthongs are no exception, inasmuch as in the sounds of *i* (*a+i*), *ow* (*a+u*), *ew* (*i+w*), and *oi* (*o+i*), the second sound is not that of the fundamental vowel, but of a corresponding semi-vowel, *y* or *w* as the case may be. This, of course, gives us *ay*, *oy*, *iw*, and *aw*; so that the rule is adhered to. In the *Phonetic Journal* this is not the orthography. Taking his cue from the old alphabet, Mr Pitman prints *i* and *u* by single letters, and *ou*, *oi* by two letters. Granting these two exceptions, which arose, I am informed, from the difficulty of inventing new and homogeneous forms of letters, and the necessity of not extending the alphabet beyond the number of letters absolutely necessary for the phonetic representation of English, the number of the vowels and the syllables agree. What, however, are we to say to such a form as *antique*, where the number of syllables is *two*, that of the vowels four? In Greek, the word would be spelt *αντικη*; and what can be done in Greek can be done in English,—“antik.”

Now it is not too much to say, that every detail that can be found in this and the preceding sections on the subject,—every detail connected with the substitution of *c* for *k*, is non-natural. The details themselves are numerous and complex enough; but their badness lies less in the number than in their non-natural character. Such, indeed, is the predominant character of everything connected with the letter under notice.

SECTION XXX.

THE REDUCIBILITY OF NON-NATURAL MODES TO RULE, OF LITTLE PRACTICAL VALUE.

But it may be said that all these expedients can be reduced to rule. Be it so. We have hitherto said much of certain vowels

which are called broad, and others which are called small or slender. We have not, however, done so as if the terms were merely indicative of some abstract quality. We have generally told the reader that the broad vowels are *a*, *o*, and *u*; the small, or slender ones, *i* and *e*. The letter *y* belongs to the same class; but as it is not always a true vowel, it has not, as a rule, been mentioned. It is a semi-vowel as well; and as it takes its place in a dictionary as such it has been classed, along with *w*, (which is never a vowel) as a consonant; at any rate, as something intermediate between the two classes. I believe that the number of true vowels in English is generally counted as five. We make it six by counting *y*; but, then, there will be only one semi-vowel; and of these there are two, *w* and *y*. Hence, *y* is an occasional or accidental vowel—not a true, not a thorough-going, not an invariable one. Be this, however, as it may, we have the fact that *a*, *o*, and *u* belong to one class, *i* and *e* to another; and that broad and small (or slender), indicate these classes.

I use, then, these words; and instead of naming five vowels in detail, give the names of two classes over which they may be distributed; the one of which consists of three members, the other of two. But, before I can make any use of the more general term, I must explain what it means. This, however, is not done in a moment. Perhaps, between the explanation and the remembrance of it, it takes up, between the teacher and the learner, more time than would be taken up by the simple exhibition of details; which, after all, are only five in number. What, then, is the value of the rule; or how far is it more compendious or general than the items which it comprehends in detail? I answer this by saying that it is better or worse as the case may be. In a treatise like the present it is better; because the present treatise is addressed to those who, to some extent, know beforehand what the terms mean; and who take them without either explanation or definition. But when we teach a child to spell they are worse. To him, who sees the letters for the first time, it is far easier to remember that before *a*, *o*, or *u*, *c* is pronounced as *k*, and before *i* and *e* as *s*, than to understand how *a* differs from *e*, or *o* from *i*. Generally speaking, rules save trouble; but this implies that they are known beforehand, and are specially applied as the case presents itself. It also implies that they cover more details than could be remembered with equal ease without the rule. But what is a rule to a child? What, indeed, is the value to an educated adult when it covers only five cases? But what if neither the rule nor the details which it comprises are wanted? What if the supposed necessity for them be wholly artificial, unnecessary, and gratuitous? What if the exposition of either one or the other, be the mere result of something which only wanted to be left alone? What if the evil be created, or kept-up, for mere sake of the abatement; or the disease for the mere trial of the remedy? Such a thing would be strange. Yet it is no more than what we find in the case before us.

The argument upon this point is simple. Let the question be one of simply teaching the art of reading ; and let *k* mean *k*, and *s* mean *s*,—nothing beyond, nothing short of this. Let *c* be nowhere ; either absolutely ejected from the alphabet, or used with another power. At least, let it be made wholly independent of both *k* and *s*. Let each word beginning with the proper sound of these two letters be spelt accordingly, or in the natural manner : or, changing the expression, let *can* and *contrary*, be spelt like *kill* and *kettle*, as *kan* and *kontrari*. In like manner let *city* and *cider* be spelt *siti* and *sider*. What happens when the child is taught to spell these words ? Simply what happens when he is taught to spell *tabby* or *tippet*, *lily* or *loving*. *K* is to him as *t* ; and *s* as *l*. What knows he, or cares to know, or ever dreams of being expected to know, anything about any difference between the vowels which may, or may not, follow ? Enough if he knows *i* or *a*, *e* or *o* ; for what they are in and of themselves. Whether they affect the sound of the consonant which precedes them, he never thinks of asking. And it is well that he does not. Provided that the alphabet and the orthography are merely what they are meant to be, phonetic, he has no need to ask.

It is clear that, in this case, *k* and *s* are simply in the position of *b* and *t*, *p* and *d*, or any other letters : and it is equally clear that when *c* is introduced it is in a different one, and this a non-natural one.

Now once again be it stated that it is not in behalf of readers, but for children learning to read, that this treatise is written. Phonetic spelling, and phonetic spelling alone, suits these. It suits others besides : but it is enough to show that for those who learn to read it is a necessity. Yet the arguments are not addressed to children. True, they are addressed to those in whose hands the education of the present generation of the children lies ; and among them it may (it is hoped) be said without discourtesy that there are many objections, which, to say the least, require to be reconsidered.

SECTION XXXI.

THE DEMERITS OF THE OTHER CONSONANTS COMPARED WITH THOSE OF C.—NONE OF THEM NON-NATURAL.

The fault of non-naturalism is co-extensive with the influence of the *c* as a substitute for *k* : and is limited by it. The other consonants are, one and all, open to exceptions ; but they are of a different and a more venial kind. Let us take them in order, beginning with the Liquids.

The Liquids, as a class, are very regular in their import, and where they are not so the explanation of their irregularity is evident. Thus, when either *l* or *r* loses, or changes, its natural sound, it is when it follows a vowel ; the sound of which has been, to some

extent, modified by the contact. With *l* we find this in such words as *falcon* and *salmon*. We know here that, though the presence of *l*, according to the current pronunciation of these words is, phonetically, objectionable, it was at some earlier (and that not a very distant) period not only justifiable but natural and necessary. The consonantal sound has since been softened down, and that of the vowel only remains. In "*falcon*" (*faucon*) it is in the first stage of its change; in "*salmon* (*sammon*) the change has gone further. To those, however, who say *saumon* the two *l*'s are in the same category.

R as has just been stated, agrees with *l* in changing its consonant character for that of a vowel. But this is, also, a natural, and explicable change.

The sound of the *a* in "*father*," or of the *a* of the French and German languages, differs from that of the *a* in *fate* and the *a* in *fat*, in the same way that the sound of *aw* in *bawl* differs from that of the *o* in *note* or *not*. The *e*, too, at the end of such words as *meine*, *deine*, etc., in German = *mine*, *thine*, is of this character. It is not mute like the French *e*. It is not sounded like *y*, as it would be, were it sounded at all, in English. It is not sounded like *er*, as the Germans sound it; for between the pronunciation of *meine* and *meiner* they make a decided and important difference; and one that often puzzles an Englishman. Nine Englishmen out of ten, especially if they come from the southern counties, think that, if they are told to pronounce the *-e* in *meine*, but not to pronounce it as *meini*, *meinee*, or *meiny*, they have no alternative but to pronounce it as *meiner*. And, in one sense, their opinion is correct. The sounds of the two words are alike; but it is not the vowel *-e* which he pronounces as *er*; but the liquid *r* which he pronounces so lightly as to make it undistinguishable from the simple vowel.

Against the other two liquids, *m* and *n*, the little that can be said is that one of them is occasionally mute. They might both be so; if it were not for a mere accident in the English language. *N* after *m* is silent; and "*condemn*" is sounded as if it ended in *m* only. The combination *nm* happens not to occur in English, otherwise *m* would be mute also; and the statement that *m* and *n* could not come together at the end of the same syllable might take a place in our grammars.

This, again, is bad spelling that has once been good. When *condemn* was a Latin word, it was, at least, a word of three syllables; in which case, *m* and *n* which are now crowded together might be what we may call *distributed*; e.g. "*condem-no*, *condem-natus*. However, as the *-o* and *-atus* here are no parts of the original root, but removable or changeable affixes, and as in the English language they are ignored, the contact of *m* and *n* gives an unpronounceable, or, at least, an inconvenient combination.

The next class consists of the three sonants *b*, *v*, and *d*. At the present time there is nothing at all against *v*; whatever may have been the case when it was written instead of *u*. Nor is there more

than one charge against *b*; and this is the fact that in certain words like "subtle, debtor, dumb," it is mute. This, however, like the combination *mn* is obsolete rather than vicious orthography. *D* would be as unexceptionable in its character as *v* and *b* if it were not the fact of being what would be called by a Hebrew grammarian a *servile* letter; i.e., a letter which is not only found in the body of a word but is made subservient to its inflection. Such is the case with *d* in "plant-ed, mov-ed, call-ed," etc., i.e. in the past tense and in the passive participle of our verbs, of which it is what is called the sign. How this affects the steadiness and regularity of its sound is best considered when we come to the notice of *s*.

To the three surds *p, f, t*, we may add *s*; for although this last letter, being connected with *c*, is, strictly speaking, foreign to the present notice, it touches the present group at a point too important to be overlooked. Of *p*, taken by itself, it may be said that, like *b*, it is occasionally silent, as in *psalm*: to which it is scarcely necessary to add that in *psalm*, as in *debtor*, it is only out of place in the present stage of the language. Of *p, t*, and *s*, collectively, it may be said that in the combinations *ph, th, sh* (the so-called aspirates) they are out of place altogether. Of *t*, in particular, something more may be said; viz., that when it is sounded as in *the, thine*, etc., it is doubly so: inasmuch as if the combination with *h* were legitimate, the combining consonant should be here not *t* but *d*.

Now here we have a rough sketch of the elements in the way of spelling of no less than ten letters of the English alphabet; against which we set those of the nine connected with *c*: and we see, at once, that the difference between the two classes is enormous. In some sense, indeed, it is a balancing of *c*, by itself, against nearly half the consonants; inasmuch as the other letters of the class which it represents are, to a great extent, what they are, on account of the connection. The exact nature, however, of the comparison is not worth either enlarging or refining on. The reader has a general view of the relations of the two classes with which it deals; and it may safely be said that no undue charge has been laid against the *c* series. We can scarcely say as much of the other. In this series have been placed the three non-natural combinations of *p, t* and *s*, with *h*, so as to form three digraphs for sounds that should only be denoted by single signs. It is probable, however, that this is not the right place for them. It is not with the three mutes that the offence lies. It is rather to be charged upon the *h*: indeed of the consonants which precede it, each is in its right place, provided only that *h* be; i.e., if *f* is to be spelt by means of *h* and any second letter, *p* is the letter that is required. And so it is with *sh*. It is the *h*, then, that has no business to be where it is. If, however, it were otherwise, the *s* would stand where it ought to do. In *th* as a sign for the first sound in *thine* (*dh*), there is a genuine error; since *t* is in a place where, under any circumstances, it is an intruder.

And other abatements may be added. With both *l* and *r* it is

a question of orthoepy rather than of orthography : and there are many who may argue that words like *falcon* and *salmon* are not so much mis-spelt as mispronounced. At any rate, there are plenty of speakers who say *saumon* ; and this is one degree nearer to the spelling. Meanwhile, the naturalist, who has often to deal with the word in its more primitive form, always pronounces the *l* in “*salmo*” and “*salmonidæ*.” So long, then, as there is a notable portion of the community which says *saumon*, where the remainder says *sammon* ; or a similar body of speakers which calls a *faucon* a *falcon*, the question of spelling is merely one of choosing between two pronunciations. A wrong choice may be made ; yet, nevertheless, the spelling may be strictly phonetic. This applies in a still greater degree to *r* as it is sounded, or rather *not* sounded, in *father*. They are many who absolutely make no appreciable difference between this word and *father*. The same persons, in most cases, if they have no knowledge of any language but their own, would, if required to write down the sound of the French, German, and Italian *a*, write *ar*. Foreigners who have asked for my own initials, and on being told that it is R. G., have, more than once, written A. G. On being corrected the answer has been,—“ Oh, yes ! it is *err*.” The evidence, however, as to the fact is ample. Nor is the explanation that the difference between the *a* in *father*, and the *au* in *bawl*, and *ar* and *or*, is merely a matter of degree, difficult. With the exception of the tongue, the different parts of the mouth are in the same position in respect to each other. With *r*, however, the tongue vibrates between the lower part of the mouth and the palate. These vibrations may be of any degree of strength or weakness ; and when they become evanescent the sound of *r* disappears. After a short vowel, the same result may be expected ; so that *er* as sounded in the German “*mein-er*,” becomes (the German) “*meine*,” in the mouth of an Englishman who speaks without due care. And, what is worse, *ü*, and *ï* are sounded as *ë*, giving *ber* as the sound of both *bür* and *für*. This is a fact which embarrasses the phonetic reformer ; for it is a serious thing to eliminate the *r*, yet it must be done if we will carry out phoneticism to the extreme. At present it is enough to say that this softening, or reduction, of the sound of *r* till it absolutely disappears is not universal, however widely it may be prevalent.

There is, then, no undue over-weighting of the *c* series ; but rather the contrary. The *c* series is non-natural : the other, faulty, but natural. Let us measure the comparative ease or difficulty with which these several details can be explained, by asking how they would strike an intelligent child, or anyone, indeed, learning to read ;—the special persons who have a paramount interest in the matter. Should he have before him a word like *debtor*, or *climb*, and ask how it came to pass that, though the *b* was not to be pronounced, it was still used in the spelling, a very moderate amount of common sense on the part of the teacher would furnish an intel-

ligible answer. The inquirer could be told that, when the word was first spelt, the *b* was actually sounded, but that, in the course of time, some persons left off pronouncing it, and then others, and, at last, everybody contrived to pass it over. This he could certainly understand; and he would, also, when he tried to say "*d-e-b-t-o-r*," and "*c-l-i-m-b*," letter for letter, see that the *b* was really in the way, and that, as it was an awkward sound to utter in certain situations, the easier forms *debtor* and *clime* took the place of the others. He might probably say—"Just what I should do myself. If I were talking in a hurry, I should certainly drop the *b*." The omission, then, of the silent letter he could understand; nor would it be difficult to complete the explanation. It is not to be expected that the changes in spelling and writing can be accommodated at once to those of speaking and pronunciation: especially when it is not likely that all the people in England would agree upon a change at the same time. The process is gradual. The change in speech comes first, that in spelling follows after. I do not say that this is the clearest way of putting the matter; nor yet that every learner would fix his attention upon the explanation at length. There are degrees on both sides. There are teachers who are indifferent at explanations, and there are learners who can never attend. I only submit that the difficulty is one in which a very simple appeal to the understanding is sufficient. The same applies to the *r* in *farther* and the *a* in *father*; though in this case it is possible that no questions would be asked. They are few who, in the first instance, are conscious of sounding the two combinations alike. The eye misleads them; and they believe in the difference because they *see* it, and because the meanings of the words are different. At any rate the answer is easy. It is simply true that the habit of identifying them is, by no means, general, and that, thousands and thousands, sound the *r* fully, and differentiate the sounds. Some, without doubt, do it with an effort, on the strength of their studies in orthoepy. But many do it unconsciously. Well, the answer to this is that the difference is real, but that so many people neglect it, that it looks as if the spelling were in fault. With slight variations, an explanation of this kind will carry us over nine-tenths of the difficulties created by these mute or silent letters, when the fact of their being obsolete is the cause of their being mute. Now this is the simplest explanation of a *non*-phonetic form of spelling in the whole domain of orthography; and it applies to the consonants of the class under notice generally. On the other hand, no rule of equal simplicity applies to *c* and its congeners. Here the rules rest on two wholly distinct bases; (1) the fact of *three* signs being used in the expression of *two* sounds, one that, of itself, requires explanation; and (2) the conditions under which each of them is used. That this is far more complex, and far less capable of being elucidated by a mere appeal to the common-sense of the learner than the other, is evident; and it cannot be argued that the simpli-

city of details makes up for the complexity of the original question. In these the fact which carries us the farthest is the difference between the broad and small vowels ; and, though it is not denied that perhaps every detail connected with them can be reduced to something like a rule, the subject is so cut-up into divisions and sub-divisions, and each rule covers so few instances, that the whole machinery is of little practical value. The character of a few of the orthographical expedients, the result of this system, has been already indicated. Now this applies to the present system of spelling ; and it is meant to show not only that there are degrees in its imperfections, but that the imperfections are so connected with certain classes of letters, as to be susceptible of a natural arrangement : indeed this is so natural that, we may to some extent, arrive at it *a priori*. We know upon what letters the chance of being dropped in pronunciation will fall ; for, independent of other causes, we know that certain combinations are practically unpronounceable, and that even out of combinations originally pronounceable the loss of a vowel may reduce them to an unpronounceable condition. Thus it is that *condem-no* becomes *condemn* ; and *domino*, if the *i* be ejected becomes *domn*. *K* is as subject to this as *b* or *p* ; and, consequently *c*, when it represents *k*, is the same, *e.g.*, in "*victuals*." We know, too, that, let the third letter be what it may, when two sounds have to be distributed between three signs, something like a system of orthographical expedients will be the result. But the domain of orthographic expedients reaches far beyond the influence of the letter *c*. When we express the shortness of a vowel by doubling the consonant that follows, we betake ourselves to a makeshift,—an orthographical expedient. When we denote its longness by doubling the vowel itself we do the same. When we use a second and a different vowel, as in *coal* or *bait*, we are again playing a variation on the same familiar instrument. So we do when we eschew such a doubling of the consonant as *thikk*, and, writing *thick*, yield to the interfering influence of *c*. When we affix a mute *e*, as in *note*, as if in love with variety and ambiguity for their own sakes, we apply a third expedient when one would be sufficient. When we keep up *both* systems, and, having one way of indicating shortness, tack on another to denote longness, we again abuse the variety and multiplicity of our resources ; for common-sense tells us that when we have one sign for either shortness or longness, (no matter which,) no second one is needed ; inasmuch as what is not the one must needs be the other. Yet we do all this : and when the very number of our expedients makes one neutralise another, we get such combinations as *antique* and *prorogue*, and "all that ends in *que* or *que*." And what, when we have done all this, if certain old combinations lose their original power ? Why, then, we get such results as the well-known powers, or want of power, of the combination *-ough*, which may be sounded as in *enough*, *cough*, *plough*, *through*, and what not : the result of which is the English orthog-

raphy, (no harder name need be given to any form of cacography,) and that for the language of Hooker and Milton.

It is plain, then, that the foregoing sketch of a classification of two classes in our system of consonants, though certainly natural, and, to some extent general, has no pretence, and is never meant to be considered exhaustive. Nor is it meant to be a mere vehicle of attack upon the unfortunate letter *c*; still less as one upon the Latin language.

One of the commonest letters that finds a place at the end of words in English is *y*. It is not the letter we expect when we treat it as a semi-vowel. On the other hand, as a vowel it has no very definite import. When sounded as *i*, (the German *ei*,) it is a diphthong. In French it is "the Greek *y*"—"y-Grec." In Latin it represents the Greek *υ* rather than any native sound. In Danish it is the German *ü*, where it is pre-eminently vocalic; an exceptional circumstance in its application to language in general. In our tongue, its sound in *quantity* and *quality* is that of *i*; or, as we write it, *e*. In *quantify* and *qualify*, it sounds as *ei* (in German). So it does in *fortify*, *magnify*, etc. With the first sound it represents the French *é*: with the second, the French *-ier*: which points to the Latin *fi*, and the root of *fac-io*. Whether, however, it gives us the substantive or the verb, the spelling is the same, though the sound is different. In *mighty*, *twenty*, and other words of English origin, it is sounded as in the substantive *quantity*, etc. There is something to reflect upon here. So far as it stands for the French *é*, it gives us an orthographical expedient; inasmuch as the accented *é* is foreign to our language, while the unaccented *e* would run the risk of being dropped as a mute. But this is not the case with the verb *qualify*. Here, we ought, on English principles, to write *i*. But we do not. This is an orthographical fancy. Why do we eschew *i* at the end of a word? The English examples help us to our answer. The *y* in *twenty*, *mighty*, etc., represents a "g" (German *zwanzig*, *machtig*): and the tail or flourish of the so-called *y* with which we round-off our final syllables is really the tail of the Anglo-Saxon and old English "g" (in form "ȝ"). The precedent being thus established, seems to have extended itself to the substantive and the verb;—as an orthographical expedient in the former, as a piece of ornamentation in the latter. In some of the manuscripts of the fifteenth century, we find this "ȝ" in the shape of "z" at the beginning of words. Here the tail is cut off, and it takes the shape of another letter, "z." Hence *zong*, which is, word for word, *young*, has been read as if it began with that letter; and grave scholars have treated the change from "ȝ" to *z*, as a real change of sound; and attributed it to a peculiarity of some specific dialect. There are ambiguities then, in the *form* of, at least, one letter.

Now in this use of *y* at the end of words, where *e* or *i* would be the better sign, we find something that bears on what Mr Ellis calls the "strange-appearance" objection. I think that if we ejected it,

and substituted for it the proper vowels, the eye would be offended. I think it would be as much offended as if we substituted a wholly new letter: provided always (and the proviso must not be under-rated,) that the substitute tallied with the other letters as well as *i* or *e* does. At present, however, I believe that such a new letter is impossible—at first. After a time a worse sign might pass without shocking us. It is not, then, the actual form of any suggested letter, and its relations to the rest of the alphabet, that alone constitute the difficulty; though it has much (very much) to do with it. The mere difference of the distribution of an existing letter would, to some extent, disturb our sense of sight.

So much, then, for the prejudice against the two small vowels at the end of a word; though the two which compose the class are in different predicaments. The exclusion of *i* is a mere fancy. For that of *e* there is a better reason. This is an expedient. The danger of its being treated as a mute, so that *quantity* would be sounded *quantite*, is a reason of some kind or other; not, indeed, a valid one, but still a reason. Be this, however, as it may, between the two—between the fancy and the expedient—both the small vowels (for *y* is a semi-vowel,) are forbidden to be final; and, as this looks something like a rule, it may suggest that the broad vowels are *not* so excluded; in other words, that the prejudice or fancy is extended to only a certain division of the vowels. Let us ask how far this is the case? Perhaps we shall find that the prejudice, fancy, or whatever else we may call it, extends to the whole system. We may limit ourselves, however, to the consideration of the monosyllables; for what applies to the shorter, will apply to the longer words as well. And the monosyllabic combinations we may exhaust; as *ba*, *be*, *bi*, *bo*, *bu*; *sla*, *sle*, *slu*, *slo*, *slu*, etc. Now, read phonetically, nearly all these constitute real words: words as they are sounded, or as they are recognised by the ear. What are they, however, to the eye? *Ba* and *bo*, as extempore interjections, may be said to be capable of being spelt as they are spelt here; but great authorities (if there are such things in so small a matter,) probably agree in writing *baa*, to denote the bleating lamb, and say *boh* to a goose. Upon matters, however, of this kind, it behoves us to speak with caution.

Now what are monosyllables that are really spelt with a vowel for their last letter? We can take them in order.

1. *Be*, the verb substantive. In *bee*, the insect, the second *e* is the *e* in *fate*, or the mute *e*, rather than the *e* in *seek*, which is the double *e*. It seems to distinguish the two words from one another. This is, certainly, its use, and it may have been its object.

2. *To*, the preposition. In *toe*, the *e* is mute. The *o* in *too* (*too* much) gives the sound of “*ū*.”

3. *Do* = the Latin *facio*. Here the sound is that of “*ū*” as in *too*. The *e* in *doe* is the *e* in *toe*. Now here, if anywhere, there is a call for the principle of differentiation. Yet it is wholly overlooked. The *do* which = the Latin *facio*, is one word. The *do*

which equals the Latin *valeo* = *be sufficient, be fit, suit*, is another. He *does this that he may succeed*, gives us the first; *this does well enough*, the second. The former is the German *thun*, the latter the German *taugen*; and, also, the Danish *duge*. There is, in Danish, no such word as *do* = *facio*. The word in that language is *gjøre*; in Scotch *gar*; as *It gars me greet* = *It makes me weep*. The past tense of *thun* is *that* = *did*. The past tense of *taugen* is *tauede*; which in English is *do-ed*, a form which no longer exists. Yet, by analogy, it is a right word; though he would be a bold man who either uttered or wrote it. The fact is that, in English, the two words have been hopelessly and irretrievably confounded. It cannot, however, be said that phonetic spelling would have succeeded in keeping them asunder.

4. *Tho* exists only as short for *though*.

5. *Go* stands on its own merits.

6, 7, 8. *So* does the same, as do *lo* and *no*.

Where two consonants precede, the vowel ending is never found. We write *sloe* and *throe*; not *slo* and *thro*.

It is safe, then, to say, that for some reason or other, the presence of *any* vowel at the end of a word is exceptional. There are, doubtless, reasons why it should be so; and none better than that of the sound itself being rare; in other words, there is a fact in language for it to rest upon. There is no doubt about this; since even where the spelling gives us such forms as *slow*, *blow*, *lay*, *say*, and the like, the semi-vowel represents an original consonant; and this is, perhaps, the fact which suggested the exclusion. Whether the retention of the consonantal element can be justified on the etymological principle is another question. On the first view we are inclined to answer in the affirmative. But, a fact which seems to be either overlooked or ignored is that of the etymological principle being an instrument which cuts in two ways. It professes to help us to the history of a word. But it does so in one direction only. By investing a dead sound with a posthumous show of life, it preserves likeness; but by neglecting the record of a change it conceals difference. The assumption that the one object is to be studied to the exclusion of the other, is wholly gratuitous. That we cannot get both, is self-evident. The real etymologist, however, can scarcely say which of the two should be sacrificed for the sake of the other. More upon this point will be said in the sequel. At present, it is sufficient to suggest that the phonetician has nothing to say to either process. He invests his alphabet and his orthography with only one function, that of representing the sounds of words as he finds them; and, so long as he holds to this, his position is impregnable.

All this prejudice, whatever may have been its foundation, is of comparatively recent origin. It is a growth rather than a fabrication. In the Anglo-Saxon it was simply impossible; since, in the Anglo-Saxon, a whole series of words, such as *steorra*, *tunga* = *star*,

tongue, etc., not only ended in a broad vowel, but is classed by grammarians in a separate declension. Others formed their plural in *u*, as *scip* = *ship*, *scipu* = *ships*. Earlier still, certain verbs formed their first persons singular in *o* and *u*. In the Northumbrian dialect, the terminations in *a* were conspicuously numerous; for one of the commonest terminations of the ordinary Anglo-Saxon of Wessex was *-an*; and this, in Northumberland, became *a*. In both the north and south, however, as the language grew more modern, each ending changed into *e*; and when the Norman Conquest introduced the French, and, with it, the mute *e*, the distinction between the original *e* of England which was sounded, and the exotic *e* of France which became silent, created a confusion; the extent of which, known to many, is pre-eminently well known to the investigators of the metres of our older poets; and a great deal of trouble it has given them, as anyone who opens a commentary upon Chaucer may see.

But neither the rarity of vowel endings (especially when the vowel is broad,) in the more modern stages of the language, nor the frequency of them in the older, is peculiar to the English. They are common in the Mæso-gothic, and in the Icelandic; and here the spelling represents them clearly, visibly, and naturally. In the German and the Danish they are now fused into the sound of *e*; and both in the Danish and the German, the letter *e* (not mute,) is common; though *a*, *o*, *u*, and *i* are rare. In the Swedish only, where the change has been less rapid, does the broad vowels appear at the end of words, and show their real strength and their true proportion to the other sounds of the language; the result being that the Swedish looks to the eye as it sounds to the ear: a language of less massiveness than the German, but a language of more freedom, breadth, and volume.

Of the semi-vowels little need be said: indeed, one of them, *y*, has already had its full share of notice. We have seen what it is at the end of words. Here it is either a vowel or diphthong, never a semi-vowel; though often, as in *lay*, *say*, etc., silent. Here, however, it represents a consonant; *g* or *k* as the case may be. At the beginning it is used invariably as a semi-vowel. In the middle it has no place except in words of Greek origin, where it represents *υ* or *hypsilon*.

W, like the mutes, is often silent; as in *write*, *wrist*. *C*, or rather *k*, is the same, and under the same conditions, that is, at the beginning of words,—*knight*, *knife*. In both cases their presence is defensible on the etymological principle; and can, moreover, as *write*, *rite*, *wright*, *right*; *knight*, *night*; be defended on the principle of differentiation. At the end of words, as in *blow*, *swallow*, etc., it represents an obsolete consonant,—*f*, *v*, or *g* for the most part. It is in its proper place in the diphthongs, *ow* and *ew*, though not combined with the proper vowel.

The vowels still stand over for notice; and the vowels, as we

shall soon see, have a great deal to answer for. They are, however, best considered in detail when we treat this part of the subject historically. The little that need be said about them, at present, applies to the general character of their demerits, which, in the great majority of cases, are referable to two heads.

1. The common, indeed, the universal fault of the vowel system, in England, as in other countries, is its primary and original incompleteness. Of *a* and *o* there are the three sounds, allied, yet different; capable of being exemplified, described, and classified. They are, also, susceptible of being named; though there is so little uniformity and system in the terms applied to them that I hesitate to use them. The *a* and *o* in *fat* and *not* are called short; the *a* and *o* in *fate* and *note* are called long: and these are words which are pretty generally adopted. But the difference between the *a* in *father* and *aw* in *bawl*, when compared with the *a* in *fate* and the *o* in *note* (with which it agrees in being long,) is not very uniformly denoted. Let us call it, for the present, the open sound of certain vowels; though the term is one which, in the French and Italian languages we must either abandon or use in a different sense. Now for each of these three modifications, a separate sign is required. It may be a wholly different letter, or it may be the original letter modified in form. We have, however, nothing nearer than *eta* and *epsilon*, and the *omega* and *omicron* of the Greek. This is as much as need be said about the original incompleteness of the vowel system. It is less deficient in some languages than in others, but, more or less, it is deficient in all. So far, then, as it occurs in English it is, by no means, a fault peculiar to that language. It is rather one which we share with the rest of the world. This is not the case with the faults of the second group.

It is one thing to have no signs at all for a pair of allied sounds; it is another thing to have, and to misdistribute, them. Thus, the Greeks have the four signs η , ϵ , ω , and \circ for \bar{e} , \acute{e} , \bar{o} , and \acute{o} , and they know how to use them. What, however, if η were treated as the long sound of ϵ , and ϵ as the short sound of ω ? This would be an abuse, a blunder; a blunder and an abuse arising out of a misconception of their true affinities. Now some languages make this blunder, and some do not. What orthography is the freest from it, is doubtful. It is certain, however, that English is the most affected by it. The best example of it is our treatment of the sound in "fine." It is really a diphthong, as in the German *feine*. With us it is the long form of the \bar{i} in *fin*.

Now, in calling combinations like these orthographical expedients, I do not say that they are contrivances; or, at any rate, that they are always such. I hold that, in most cases, they were not framed with a definite sense of their future functions, or, that they were not consciously constructed as means towards an end. I merely state that their effect and operation is just what it would have been if they had been so constructed. They are expedients to

all practical intents and purposes. They need not have been meant as such; they need not have been made at all. They seem to have grown: though how we get the results of design with nothing but the mere growth of a system of spelling as the designer I do not pretend to say: nor do I think anyone could explain it without getting within the region of abstractions.

In like manner, I do not consider that in calling these expedients non-natural I make them artificial. In many cases their origin has been, as has just been stated, spontaneous. They developed themselves under certain conditions of language; rather than out of the conscious working of any particular individual; though of this they may be instances. The process by which letters become mute is one of a much simpler character, and the explanation of them may generally be found within the words wherein they occur. Most of the expedients are connected with the letter *c*. That part of our spelling which lies within the immediate and remote influence of this exotic and unnecessary letter we may liken to a tree of foreign origin and southern growth, transplanted on the soil of England: that has brought with it a parasite, by which it is encumbered. The parasite may not be without its uses; for it may indicate to the observer the original country of the tree. It may serve, too, for some subordinate purposes of ornament. But it checks the natural growth of the tree; warping, nipping and distorting both trunk and branch, and weakening their fibre till the whole tissue becomes fragile, corrupt and mouldering. On the other hand, the parts constituted by the original consonants, though neither undying, nor self-renewing, are free from such an incubus as this. The worst that can befall them are the ordinary evils of growth,—old age, and decay. Here and there a branch loses its vitality, and, so long as it remains in its place, encumbers the tree. The remedy, however, is occasional inspection; and a clearing away of the dead wood is all that is needed for a strong, healthy and natural revival of their true vitality.

We have thus exhibited, in a general way, the characteristics of two classes of letters according to their use and power in the spelling of the English language, as illustrative of the principles of the present orthography; in doing which great stress has been laid upon the fact of each group being a natural one: inasmuch as the faults of each division not only differed in number and gravity according to the letters upon which they were charged, but were referable to a different origin, and amenable to different remedies. There were degrees, then, of faultiness, and, in these degrees, varieties as to the extent to which the faults were more or less easily abated. Nevertheless, under the most favorable view of the more favored of the two classes there was a certain amount of deficiency, redundancy, and inconsistency, of which the best that could be said was that there were certain principles at the bottom of them; that, on these, certain rules could be constructed; and that, above all, there were connected with the system, certain secondary advantages which might be considered as

a set-off to the admitted evils of the system. That there are some such advantages is admitted by the advocate of the Phonetic system ; just as his opponent admits that there are some demerits in the existing system. The demerits are both numerous and important. Hence, the question is one of comparison. What is the price at which the advantages of the present system are bought ? The phonetician insists that there is no equality, nor even an approach to it, between them.

Now, however much it may be the case, that the complexity of the present system is different for the different parts into which it is divided, and that in one of them it may be much less than in the other, the phonetic system is wholly free from complexity of any sort. In this it differs from the existing orthography not merely in degree but in kind. The extent to which this is the case is so great that it almost degrades the Phonetic principle to a truism. It is too simple, and too natural, to be really a system at all. And, perhaps, such is actually the case. Yet it is purely, simply, and absolutely neither more nor less than the present system divested of its extension to secondary and subordinate purposes. It is simply a translation of the audible sounds of which the ear is the organ that takes cognizance, into the visible signs which appeal to the eye, and which, by so doing, are made permanent. Surely this is sufficient. Surely this is something that can be allowed to stand or fall by its own merits. Surely this is an aim and object which wants no recommendation from any secondary aims to which it may be made subservient. If it cannot stand alone it cannot, and ought not to stand at all.

Let, then, the simplicity and singleness of this aim be the characteristic ; and, as an expansion of this, let the utter absence of all secondary aims be taken as the result. Under these conditions spelling is reduced to the three following operations :

1. The resolution of any word, as the speaker utters it, to its elementary articulate sounds. This, however, as far as the speaker is concerned, is already done ; and the signs which denote them are letters.

2. A familiar knowledge of the forms of them.

3. The way of putting them together.

The result is a spelt word : the spelling of which is as pure a matter of certainty as the sum in a series of numbers in arithmetic. This process with letters as the symbols, is not, does not profess to be, easier than the corresponding process in arithmetic. It requires care, and a sustained attention ; probably to the same degree. It is not learned with equal ease by every learner. But it is equally simple, and its results are equally sure.

Does it then make bad spelling impossible ? It does so in the way that bad addition is impossible. The operator may be careless ; or he may manage his tools in an unworkmanlike manner. This, however, is his fault ; not that of the system : and for faults of this

kind we must allow in our teaching just as we do in the teaching of the rule of addition. Can as much be said of the present system?

But the learner may pronounce his words wrongly. Be it so. All that the phonetic system requires is that—given the right pronunciation of a word, the right spelling of it shall follow as a matter of course. With a learner from the provinces there are many pronunciations, which, as a matter of standard orthoepy, are wrong. With the best educated men in England the pronunciation of a certain number of words is doubtful. Phonetic spelling does not profess to teach pronunciation or orthoepy. It merely professes to supply an orthography. It takes a certain pronunciation, whether right or wrong, and represents it. The present system does the same; but it misrepresents it. The difference between the two is a matter not of degree but of kind.

SECTION XXXII.

THE PHONETIC PRINCIPLE.

We have hitherto considered the principles of phonetic spelling exclusively in respect to its opposition to the existing systems now prevalent, both in England and elsewhere: and it may, probably, have struck some of our readers that it is only so far as it is antagonistic to something else that it has any existence, or, at any rate, any claim upon our attention. This, however, is far from being the case. If phonetic spelling were as prevalent as it is now exceptional, indeed if it were dominant throughout the whole domain of language, and if the opposite systems were non-existent, there would still be more than one question of some practical importance connected with it. The rule that the representation of the sounds of language is not only the primary but the exclusive function of orthography, though it carries us far, does not carry us all the way.

Upon the analysis of sentences into words, of words into syllables, and of syllables into their ultimate elementary articulations or breathings the whole basis of spelling and writing rests. No analysis, no letter. This is the rule. But analysis, wherever it occurs, or whatever it may be applied to, is essentially a matter of degree. It may stop after the first subdivisions of the subject matter, or it may be carried onwards and onwards, and farther and farther, until not only nothing remains to be separated from anything, but until the last sign of composition has disappeared. At the same time, it by no means follows that this extreme form of analysis is necessary: and, when this is needless, the extension of the phonetic notation is equally so.

Now the reduction of a sentence into its constituent parts may stop at words; or it may go on to the analysis of the constitution of an elementary sound. How far, then, are we to follow it in our notation? There may be sounds that, while they vary from one

another, vary so slightly as not to be worth the sign that should express their difference. There may be sounds that though manifestly compound have their parts combined with different degrees of closeness. In the one case there may be contact, and contact only. In another the contact may amount to continuity, unity, confluence, or fusion: so that when two sounds come into juxtaposition, the combination, to borrow an illustration from chemistry, may be either mechanical or chemical. There are limits, then, to the application of the principle under notice; and it is better that they should be indicated by an upholder of the system than by an impugner.

We must not expect to get much out of any definition of the term *phonetic*; neither must we argue too much from its derivation. In ordinary conversation, in controversial discussion, and even in scientific investigation, the several derivatives of the Greek word *φωνή* = *voice*, have, by no means, exactly the same import. That such laxity should exist in the use of so important a series of words is, doubtless, a matter of regret: but such laxity throughout the whole length and breadth of both the English and the other languages of the civilized world is the rule rather than the exception. Those who merely think in a general way that the difference between the spoken and the written language of their countrymen is an evil which should be abated may use the word with the proper amount of generality, and call any alphabet which brings us nearer to the actual phonēsis of our language *Phonetic*. But if, besides doing this, he be familiar with the question from the controversial point of view, and, learn from it, as he cannot fail to do, the extent to which the English letters are forced to represent something other than the *sounds* of the English language; and that the chief reason for so forcing them is the supposition that certain etymological, historical, or grammatical facts are, thereby, obtained, he soon forms the habit of attaching to the word *phonetic* a meaning which is little more than the opposite to *etymological*. It is probable that when the term is applied to our orthography in general, and when we talk or write about phonetic spelling, this use of the word is the most usual one.

Then, there are those who neither know nor care to know anything about either Phonēsis or Etymology; and these ignore both words. Their name is legion. On the other hand, there are the few who employing themselves in the study of the elementary sounds either of one language in particular or of language in general, look at the term from a purely scientific point of view. The relation which the elementary sounds bear to each other; their classification, the names applied to their divisions and subdivisions; the purely anatomical question of the conditions of the speech-forming organs required for the formation of each particular sound; and, higher still, the purely physical investigation of the nature of tone, pitch, and all that belongs to the theory of vibrations,—all this suggests such a word as *Phonetics*; a word which is no adjective at all but a substantive; a substantive, too, in the same class with Mathematics, Physics, and

more especially, Acoustics with which it is connected in respect to its subject-matter as well as its form. Questions of phonetics consist, in the first place, of an application of Acoustics and Physiology to a particular point in the formation of articulate sounds; and, in the second place, of the particular relations of such sounds to one another, and the general character of the system that results from them. Now all this is very independent of spelling, or the notation of sounds; so much so that a man may care a great deal about Phonetics, but very little about phonetic spelling. On the other hand the connection between phonetic spelling and phonēsis, or the sound-system of a language is of the closest: indeed the two terms stand to one another as Orthoepy and Orthography. No one should know better the differences between an all-sufficient, or a scientific, alphabet for the English language, and a practical, or an adequate one, than the present reformers. And, indeed, they know it well. If it were not so, they would never have done a tenth part of the work that has been done by them. An alphabet that shall represent the whole compass of the Phonesis of our language must deal with our provincial dialects; and everyone knows that in these we find sounds absolutely foreign to those of the written, or rather the literary, language of our country. Sometimes they are as alien to the classical or standard English as the German *ch* or the French *eu*, and we know that the accurate pronunciation of these is not learnt from mere inspection, not learnt in an hour or day; sometimes, when either the teaching or the ear is deficient, never learnt at all. Nevertheless, we find something very like the one in our northern, and something very like the other in our western, forms of English. Yet for these sounds we find, both in the literary German and the literary French separate expressions; not, indeed, in the shape of new letters but of special and appropriate combinations. For the more refined departments of pure Phonetics a still greater amount of refinement is needed. In short, an alphabet for the ordinary purposes of primary education is one thing; one for the English Phonesis of the language in its fulness and integrity, another; while different from both is the one that is required for the more abstruse questions in Phonetics. Now what is wanted for the purposes of the present treatise is the first; and that only. Its principle is that of the other two, but it is not to be carried so far. It may, indeed, be said that, in this case, the language and its medium should coincide; indeed, the practical test of phonetic spelling is—given the right pronunciation of a word, its accurate representation by spelling should follow as a matter of course; or, to put the case more strongly—given a correct orthoepy, an incorrect orthography shall be impossible. But this implies that the orthoepy should be that of the standard pronunciation. We know, however, that this is not the case, and we also know that if we wait until it is, we shall wait till the Greek Kalends.

I will now illustrate, perhaps over-amply, the distinction, already

foreshadowed, between mere contact and fusion; and it shall be by a combination which, as it is pretty common in our own language, carries with it a presumption in favor of its being of some practical importance. Whether, in the matter of spelling, and for the purpose of teaching, is the easiest, to add so many new letters to an alphabet, and to lay them before the learner as such, or to spell their respective sounds by a pair of letters, already known as parts of the English language, and to show that, by putting the same together the same sound is adequately expressed? The word *adequately* is, of course, used with foresight. The answer, on the first view, is at hand. A single letter in the place of two is only the old story of the compendiums over again. It is merely *x* instead of *ks*; and this we have rejected. It is merely *k+s* written short: and that *x* is *k+s* every one can see: indeed it is seen so plainly that *x* is already unanimously banished in Phonetics.

This is making short work of the matter. But what if the work be too short? Why is it wrong, in spelling, that it is simply phonetic to write words like *philosophy* and *Philip* with *ph* to represent *f*? The fact of the letters *not* being the result of the combination *p+h*. The fact that there is no combination at all. The fact that the sound, being a simple one, is properly represented by *f*, or by some equivalent sign equally simple. *F* is allied to *ph*; but it is not made up out of *p* and *h*, nor yet out of *p* and anything else.

Let us now consider the *sound* of the *ch* in *chest*. It has, doubtless, a fair claim to be put in the same category with *ph* for *f*. It is spelt by means of a single letter in Russian, and that with practical advantage. On the other side, either it or something so like it as to be distinguished from it by only a trained ear, is spelt in German by no fewer letters than four. The German for "*German*" is "*Deutsche*." The *-tsch* is the *-tch* in *Dutch*; which is the *-tch* in *witch*; which is the *-ch* in *which*; which is *tsh*. Of these two extreme forms, which is the better? The German form, before it can be compared with our own, must be, so to say, purified, or reduced to its lowest terms, by the ejection of the *c*. This brings it to *Deutshe*, which when the *c* in *witch* is reduced to *s*, makes the two words alike, according to the ordinary English spelling. Phonetically, however, the *sh* is *f*: so that the true orthography becomes *tʃ*, (*tʃest* = *chest*): and of the *t* in *tin* and the *sh* in *shin* the sound is, indubitably, made. But it is written in the most advanced orthographies by a single letter,—in the Russian and in the phonetic English as we have seen. Why is it thus exceptional? Why is the rule which, without a second thought, eliminated our *x*, thus apparently transgressed? Why, too, is the rule violated under which *ph* was converted into *f*?

The reason lies in the fact that, though the sound is as truly compound as that of *x*, the compound is of a different character; or rather in *x* we have no compound at all. Instead of this, we have a combination. In *x* we have *k+s* in a single sequence. The *s* fol-

lows the *k*. The *s* touches the *k*. But sequence with simple contact is one thing; sequence with partial fusion another. And with the *ch* in *chest* we have fusion: and this it is which differentiates the $x = k + s$, and, $ch = t + sh$.

There are few ears which cannot distinguish between the two sounds; few that fail to appreciate some difference between the *t-sch* in *Deutsch*, as pronounced by a German and the *tch* in *Dutch* as pronounced by an Englishman. How it is effected will be seen hereafter.

As the *ch* in *chest* is to $t + sh$ so is the *j* in *jest* to $d + zh$ —sound for sound. Both are what are called *sibilant* or *hissing* letters. *S*, *z*, *sh*, and *zh* are the simple, and *tsh* and *dzh* the compound, sibilants; and in these six sounds there is either a system or the part of one.

Now this is merely given as an example of the difference between mere contact, and fusion more or less complete. Whether the representation of the sounds of the *ch* in *chest*, and of the *j* in *jest*, be best given by two letters or one, is a matter of *adequacy*, upon which, at present, I commit myself to no opinion; leaving it to those who have more familiarity than myself with the practice of primary education.

I add, however, that what applies to the compound sibilants among consonants applies also to the diphthongs among vowels; indeed, the combinations are, in each case diphthongal, and I see no reason against the recognition of consonantal, as well as vocalic, diphthongs.

SECTION XXXIII.

LIMITATIONS OF THE PHONETIC PRINCIPLE CONTINUED—ITS INFLUENCE ON A LARGE SCALE.

We have hitherto considered the limitations of the phonetic system from one point of view only; or only so far as we were led to them by the process of analysis; only so far as they shewed themselves, so to say, *in minimis*: i.e., in the resolution of certain combinations wherein we could discover the elements, but found them so blended together that they took the garb of simple sounds. But the process may be reversed; and we may take the subject from a different point of view. What if, instead of being found in the ultimate elements of a word, this process of amalgamation be found to affect two different words? Is this a real or an imaginary case? We shall find it to be real. We find, indeed, something like it in English. We find *syllables* affected by it. Let us take a word beginning with *con-*. They are certainly numerous enough for all intents and purposes. Betake yourself to a dictionary; and count the words (all of which are compounds) which begin with this favored prefix. Count even the columns; count even the pages that are required to contain them. They are more than all the entries under

several of the less important letters put together. Then take the compounds beginning with *com*; i.e., after counting the words like *contend*, count those like *combustion*; remembering, at the same time, that when *con-* comes before the sound of *k*, and is accented, it is sounded as *-ng*. Observe, too, that before *r* it slips out of the word altogether, and the *r* is doubled; the same being the case when it is followed by *-l* or *-m*, as *collect*, *correct*, *command*, etc. The rules that regulate these changes need only to be indicated. The fact, which is here only applied for the purposes of illustration, is universally recognized. The words thus beginning are, as a rule, of Latin origin; and the meaning of their first syllable is *with*. Its form, as a separate word, is *cum*. Before, however, words beginning with *t* the *m* becomes *n*; before *k*, *ng*; before *m*, *l*, or *r* it becomes silent, but doubles (to the eye at least) the consonant which it precedes. This is a law of what is called euphony, or harmonious speech; and, as we have seen, is at least common to the Latin and English languages. But it exists, in a more developed form in the Greek as well; and probably, in every language under the sun; provided only that the necessary apparatus of changeable consonants be at hand; that the combinations be sufficiently close to constitute a single compound word; and, thirdly, that the compound be of sufficiently long standing in the language where it is found to have, so to say, shaken down into its true form. They have done this in English, French, and other tongues; whether taken up as Latin words, or put together after the precedents of the earlier examples. They have, also been recognized in the spelling; and both the spelling and the speaking are the better for it.

But what if this practice of euphonic accommodation, adaptation, or assimilation be extended from syllables of the same word, to different words? What if the letters at the end of one word affect those at the beginning of another? The least that can be said of such a case is that it would disguise the real nature of the second; and make the references to an ordinary dictionary a matter of some difficulty.

It may be said, however, that this is a case beyond the pale of the English language; that it does not affect us; and that it is an extreme, if not an imaginary instance. It is *not* the latter: though it *is* the former. For general statements, however, extreme instruments are the legitimate and recognized tests: and the principle now under discussion is the universality of the application of the phonetic system in orthography.

Now the language in which this process of spelling is recognized is no less a one than the magnificent, venerable, and well-spelt Sanskrit. The following extracts, illustrative of this, are from two of our most recent grammars. The process, however, is equally recognized in the older ones.

The change illustrated by the sentence, *Rara avis*, etc., and the change illustrated by the words *συγγνωμη*, are essentially the

same : and, as the connexion, as we shall see, is called *sandhi*, there are two kinds of it, (1) the *internal* which affects the middle, and (2) the *external* which affects the extremities of words.

We are accustomed in Greek and Latin to certain euphonic changes of letters. Thus *rego* makes, in the perfect, not *regsi*, but *reksi* (*rexi*), the soft *g* being changed to the hard *k* before the hard *s*. Similarly, *veho* becomes *veksi* (*vedi*). In many words a final consonant assimilates with an initial; thus *συν* with *γνώμη* becomes *συγγνώμη*; *ἐν* with *λάμπω*, *ἐλλάμπω*. . . . These laws for the euphonic junction of letters are applied throughout the whole range of the Sanskrit grammar; and that, too, not only in uniting different parts of one word, but in combining words in the same sentence. Thus, if the sentence *Rara avis in terris* were Sanskrit, it would require by the laws of *Sandhi* or combination, to be written *Rāravirins tirriḥ*; and might even be joined together thus, *Rāravirinstirriḥ*. The learner must not be discouraged if he is unable to understand all the laws of combination at first. To attempt to commit to memory a number of rules, the use of which is not fully seen till he comes to read and construct sentences, must only lead to a loss of time and patience.—*Monier Williams; Practical Grammar of the Sanskrit Language. Chapter 2.*

In Sanskrit every sentence is considered as an unbroken chain of syllables. Except where there is a stop, which we should mark by interpunction, the final letters of each word are made to coalesce with the initial letters of the following word. The coalescence of final and initial letters) of vowels with vowels, of consonants with consonants, and of consonants with vowels) is called *Sandhi*.

As certain letters in Sanskrit are incompatible with each other, *i.e.*, cannot be pronounced one immediately after the other, they have to be modified or assimilated in order to facilitate the pronunciation. The rules, according to which either one or both letters are thus modified are called the Rules of *Sandhi*. *Max Müller; Sanskrit Grammar for Beginners. Chapter 2.*

The Sanskrit is a dead language; so that the exact appreciation of the extent to which this system of *Sandhi* either helped or impeded the reader is impossible. Much, however, as its novelty may strike us, the practice is more or less common in many languages; though, as Wilson remarks, the change is prosodial rather than grammatical.

Contrivances for avoiding the concurrence of harsh or incongruous sounds, or the displeasing hiatus which arises from keeping sounds apart that are disposed to coalesce, are not wanting in all languages. They are in general, however, rather poetical or prosodial than grammatical; such as the elision of a final *e* before an initial *e*, in such a concurrence as "the ethereal height of heaven," which it was formerly the fashion to write, as the measure demanded, "*th'* ethereal;" to say nothing of the synalepha and ecthipsis of the Latin verse "*Monstr' horrend' inform' ingens,*" etc. Other instances of regard for euphony, however, do occur, independent of prosody, and especially in Greek, in which many of the euphonic changes are analogous to those provided for in Sanskrit.—*H. H. Wilson; Introduction to the Grammar of the Sanskrit Language.—Chapter 2.*

SECTION XXXIV.

THE PHONETIC SYSTEM—ITS OCCASIONAL LIABILITY TO BE APPLIED PREMATURELY. ITS INFLUENCE UPON THE FIXATION OF A LANGUAGE.—HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE TWO SERIES *K-TSH* AND *G-DZH*.

The question as to the extent of the applicability and the universality of the application of the Phonetic System has thus far been illustrated by two classes of facts; those that relate to the analysis of certain combinations, and those that relate to the effects of the Euphonic Principle: and it is clear that the two groups are very different. The limitations that they illustrate are what we may call Formal; inasmuch as it is with the particular forms which such or such an orthography may take that they are specially connected. In the division of the subject now coming under notice the question of Form will be wholly out of sight: for the question will be one of Time rather than aught else: time meaning that particular stage in the development—that date in the lifetime of a language—for which the application of the phonetic principle is, comparatively speaking, well or ill adapted. The introduction of an alphabet, and along with it, a reduction of the language to which it applies to writing is, of itself, a boon of such unparagoned value that there is no possible time or season at which it can, under any circumstances, be other than a good. It is one of those blessings which can never come either too early or too late. At the same time, the period during which the language, either wholly or partly, is, more or less, in a transitional state, is not the best time for its introduction. There are, probably, in all languages, at every period, certain words of which the pronunciation is not absolutely fixed; and that, not so much because certain speakers have not come to an agreement as to the way in which certain doubtful words are to be sounded, as because there are (as facts of language) certain combinations of an unstable character: *unstable*, be it noted, being a word which we have seen before, and one which we shall see again; a word of no slight importance in both this and the following section. The term was applied to the series

1. *Kia, kya, ksha, tsha* :
2. *Gia, gya, gzha, dzha*,

and no series better illustrates it: and no series better shows what would happen to an orthography which was introduced either just when the pronunciation of *ka* or *ga*, began to grow unsteady, or just when *kya* or *gya* was beginning to change into *ksha* or *gzha*; or these sounds, one or both, into *tsha* or *dzha*—where, for the first time we get a *stable* combination. The least that can be said of them is that they would run a chance of being very soon altered: and though this is an objection of very little weight it is sufficient to show that there are certain times in the lifetime of a

language, when either the introduction of a new, or the change of an old, combination, is less likely to be permanent than at others: a remark which we may now conveniently illustrate by the actual history of these two series—not, however, for a reason which may have already suggested itself, so closely and so exactly as we wish. Nevertheless, by referring to one language for one, and to another for another, part of the process, we arrive at a reasonable conclusion; and invest a sequence of changes which has hitherto been based on *a priori* notions, with something like the reality of history.

We begin with the two extremes. There was a time when the *c* in words like *chest* and *Chester*, was sounded as *k*: and of this time, there is, in most cases, ample and superabundant evidence. Had the *c* to which we now give the power of *s*, always been so sounded, it would never have been introduced in any language where a sign for the genuine and original *s* existed. What, indeed, would have been its use? If words like *city*, had always, or when they were first derived from words like *civis*, been sounded *sity*, how would they differ from words like *save*, *slave* and the like; and, if not differing, why would they require a special sign or letter? Again, if the original sound were not that of *k* why would the letter *c* be assigned to them? For *c*, to a great extent, is the same as *k*. It is needless, however, to limit ourselves to the consideration of the presumptions of the case when there is evidence enough to make them unnecessary. It is admitted that the *c* in such a word as *city*, was once sounded as *k*. Thus much, perhaps, would hardly have been denied by a respectable philologue in the days of our distant ancestors. At the present time it is insisted upon; in some instances to the extent of changing the existing pronunciation of English-Latin; or Latin as it is taught in England. Upon this, it is needless to enlarge.

Now if the evidence of the Latin language be condemned as insufficient there is that of the Greek in the background. With words like *κητος* and *κιστη* to give us the old sound of the *c* in *cetaceous* and *chest*, we may, if necessary, dispense with the evidence of the Latin language altogether. Do I hold, then, that in the Italian where the *c* before *i* is sounded just as it is the English *chest*, it has grown out of that of the *k* in *κιστη*, and that the connection between these two extreme forms is that of the sequence *ke*, *kye*, *ksh*, *tsh*, with an unstable, transitory, or even ephemeral *ksh*, as a missing link, may have had a function and played a part—a short but important one? Such is my belief: indeed, it is already to be found, implicitly, in what I have already written. If *tsh*, then, have been *ksh*, and *ksh* have been *ky*, and *ky* have been *k*, and the changes from one sound to the other have gone on more rapidly than the corresponding change in the spelling, it is possible that one or more than one of the intermediate forms may never have been recorded; never, indeed, indicated or even hinted at. It is more than possible. It is almost certain that such has been the case.

That the *c* in Latin, at some comparatively early period, was sounded as *k*, is certain; certain, too, it is that at a comparatively late period (*i.e.* the present time) it is sounded both as *tsh* (in Italian) and as *s* (in French and English). The power, however, of the letter during the intermediate period is by no means certain; and the longer that period is the greater the chance of some intermediate stage falling within it. It does not, then, follow that because the Latin *c* = *k* at one era of the Latin language, it may not have been something else at another, namely, *tsh* or *ksh* as the case may be—*tsh* at a late date, *ksh* at an intermediate one. In our own language I hold that in some words we have the series of changes in full; from simple *k* to complex *tsh*. The simple *k* we get in the Latin *castrum* or *castra*. The West-Saxon spelling, however, is “*ceaster*,” where the *e* = the German and Scandinavian *i* or *j*; which, in its turn, is equivalent to English *y*. Hence, *ceaster* = *cyaster* = *kjaster* in Norse and German. But the Norwegian reading of a word thus spelt is (approximately) *kshaster*, which, in Swedish, is *tshaster*. At one time the word under notice was sounded *kyaster*, at another *kshaster*, at another *tshester*—the change from *a* to *e* being no part of the present question. That *Chester* is now called *Tshester* is certain. That the poet *Ceadmon* called himself either *Kyadmon* or *Kshadmon*, and that his contemporaries said either *kyaster* or *kshaster*, I hold to be nearly certain. But, how some scores of words were sounded in this or that district, at this or that time, during the intervening period, I cannot say. I cannot say when an older form died out, nor yet when a newer one started into life.

If *g* stands to *dzh*, as *k* to *tsh*, the history of the two series

Ka, kya, ksha, tsha

Ga, gya, gzha, dzha

may be expected to run parallel to each other. But we have already said that this is the case only on the first view of the subject. In reality the lines diverge; the reason being, as has already been stated, the affinity, in an opposite direction, between *g* and *y*. Hence, while *ka* almost always runs through *kya* to *ksha*, *ga* often runs through *gya* to *ya*.

Now the actual exhibition of these changes is not an easy matter: and we know the reason why. The chances are that a sound which changes quickly may pass away without ever being recorded; and without leaving any visible sign of its existence; more especially is this likely in languages where there is no sign for the sound of *sh*; as is often the case. The best illustration known to me is to be found in the triple history of the combination *k + y* in the three countries of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The ordinary spelling is *kj*; *j* being, as in German, the sign for the semi-vowel *y*. In Denmark this is sounded sometimes as *k* simply, sometimes as *ky*. In Norway it is *ky*, and something very like *ksh*. In Sweden it is *tsh*. Whether, or when, the Danish will go farther in the direction of *tsh*, remains to be seen. The Swedish has attained that final goal.

The Norwegian gives the transitional form. But there is no use in concealing the complications of the question. The transitional character of the Norwegian *kj* is itself transitional: and it is only dealing fairly with the reader to show the extent to which this intermediate sound is, or is not, found in Norway. The present writer may, also, add that, upon the nature of it, he is not only an exposition, but a witness, and not a mere second-rate authority. The connection of the Norwegian *kj*, with *ksh* cannot be seen by mere inspection. The Norwegian language, unlike the Swedish, has no specific grammar of its own; because, though the Swedish is treated as a different language from the Danish, the Norwegian, so far as the written, literary, classical, or standard language is concerned, is simply Danish. The explanation of this is found in the political history of the two countries; a point which needs only being indicated. There is, indeed, at the present moment, a movement in Norway to develop out of the provincial dialects an eclectic form of speech which shall, at one and the same time be non-Danish, non-Swedish, Sandinavian, Norse, Norwegian and national; in short an artificial language: an attempt upon which we pass no opinion. Hence, as literary languages, the Norwegian and Danish are the same: and, though such may exist, I know of no grammar which makes the peculiar Norwegian sound of *kj*, the object of any special treatment. It is not, then, on the surface that this peculiarity is to be found. Yet everyone who has any practical knowledge of the Norwegian Danish knows that in words like *kjöre* = drive, and *Kjöbenhavn* = Copenhagen, etc., the sound of the first two letters is different in the two languages, dialects, forms of speech or whatever we choose to call them. Sometimes, indeed, they are identical, but, in this, the influence of the written language plays a part. But, even when the difference is manifest, the pronunciation of the differentiated combination is not constant. Sometimes it is that of the true continuous surd of the *k* series;—a rare sound. Upon the whole, however, it is a sound which is to *ksh* as the *ch* in *chest* is to *tsh*. I speak upon the point as a witness, because I am not aware of this very important fact in phonetics having hitherto had more than a cursory notice—if it has had this. But, at the same time, I speak with the diffidence of one who is pronouncing upon a sound foreign to his own tongue; and as I make no secret of being suspicious of other persons in such cases, it is only right I should, to some extent, draw attention to an opinion of my own. I have, however, made a point of checking it by that of natives; and, although I cannot say that an Englishman who sounds *kjöre* exactly as *kshöre* will speak exactly like a Norwegian, I have no hesitation in saying that he will utter the sound into which *ky* ran, and out of which the Swedish *tsh* arose. This I believe, in the special pair of languages before us, it preceded, as a cause precedes an effect. I believe, also, that it has done so in many other languages; in other words that the order of sequence is a fact of very general occurrence. Upon its univer-

sality I see no need of delivering an opinion. Practically, however, I hold that the presence of *tsh*, connected with the *k*-series, implies a previous *ky*; and that *ky*, wherever it occurs, is a *tsh* in *posse*. Yet the evidence to the reality of this sequence of changes is so indefinite that, even in the best illustration I have been able to hit upon, the line of argument is circuitous and indirect. No wonder. The same fact in language which makes *ky* and *ksh* unstable combinations, exposes them to the risk of not being orthographically represented.

But the Norwegian forms of the Scandinavian or Norse, tell us something more. Instead of *gy* running parallel with *ky* it diverges. Instead of running into *gzh* it runs into *y*; so that, while *kjöre* = *kshöre*, *gjente* (*wench*) = *yente*: a difference which has already been indicated.

There are two other sounds of the *k* series which still require notice: viz., the two which stand to those of *k* and *g*, respectively, as *f* and *v* stand to *p* and *b*; or as the *th* in *thin* and *thine* stand to *t* and *d*. There is much more to be said about them than is to be found in the ordinary grammars; in many of which there is much that requires correction. Neither is it very easy to write about them concisely; inasmuch as the terms which apply to them are less definite than they should be. In describing or classifying the *mutes* of either the English or any other language, it is barren work to talk of them as lenes and aspirates, or as hard and soft. But, as they actually form a system, and as that system must be exhibited, four terms at least are required. *Explosive* and *continuous* (sometimes, more conveniently, *explodent* and *continuant*); *sonant* and *surd* will be the terms used here: the last two from the grammars of the Sanskrit grammars, *explosive* and *continuous* from the older writers in general; especially those who treated the classification of articulate sounds as anatomists or physiologists. The *b* in *ba*, when pronounced separately from the vowel, is explosive, and sonant; explosive because the sound, as that of a consonant only, cannot be continued; and sonant because its sound is uttered at the ordinary pitch of the voice. *F* on the other hand is continuous and surd; for the sound itself can be prolonged; but, whether prolonged or not, it is uttered as a whisper. Hence the following system:

EXPLOSIVE.		CONTINUOUS.	
<i>Surd.</i>	<i>Sonant.</i>	<i>Surd.</i>	<i>Sonant.</i>
p	b	f	v
t	d	th (in <i>thin</i>)	th (in <i>thine</i>)
k	g	ʔ	ʔ
—	—	s	z
—	—	sh	zh.

In the *s* series there are no explodents; so far, however, as sonancy and surdness go, it agrees with that of *p*, *t*, and *k*. If it were otherwise, and if we could add the surd and sonant continuants of the *k* series, or, changing the expression, the sounds which stand to *k* and *g* as

f and *v* to *p* and *b*, etc., we should have a full and perfect quaternion ; or four series of four similarly modified forms. As it is, we have only an approach to it. The class, however, as far as it goes, is natural. The sounds which constitute it are more closely allied with each other than they are with the sounds of any other group ; yet, at the same time they have relations with the rest of the alphabet *V*, related to *f*, on the one side, is related to *w* on the other ; through *w* to *u* ; and, finally, through *u* to *o* and the vowels in general. Then there is an affinity between *m* and *b* ; so that the full sequence runs

m, b, p, f, v, w, u, etc.,

with a liquid at one end and a vowel at the other.

We have nearly the same sequence in the series beginning with *k* ; and, if we had, on our language, the continuants of *k* and *g*, we should have it entirely. Now what are these sounds ? They are *not* those of the so-called gutturals, *i.e.*, *kh* (or *ch*) and *gh* ; sounds which, though foreign to our own language are common enough elsewhere : as in the German, the Welsh, and the Gaelic. These are *not* the continuants here under notice ; though often confounded with them. The place of the continuants in the sequence is that of *f* and *v* in the *p* series ; and that is between the explosives and the semi-vowels ; a fact which connects them with *y*, just as *f* and *v* are connected with *w*. Now these are conditions which are not fulfilled by the so-called gutturals.

The sound is a rare one. It is certainly found as one of the pronunciations of the Norwegian *kj*. It may be heard occasionally, and sporadically, in England. There are certain speakers who, when they use the word *h-u-m-o-r* never say, exactly, either "*hew-mor*," or "*yoo-mor*," but something like *oo* preceded by a sound intermediate to that of *k* and *y*. With stammerers, as far as my own observation goes, this practice is common. Now this is the sound in question, or the continuant of *k*. It is not, of itself, an easy sound ; still less so when we have to compare it with its nearest congener, the continuant of *g*. In fact, the latter generally runs into *y*. It may be heard, however, in more than one of the Low German dialects. Like *ky* and *gy*, to which it is closely allied, it is a very unstable sound ; and, as such, rare.

Thus much has been written upon the question of Unstable Combinations ; and it has been written with a special view to the following question. Admitted, that an alphabet with its corresponding orthography is, in and of itself, an undeniable benefit to a language, can there be such a thing as certain times, dates, or stages in the growth, or development of that language in which the introduction of it is less opportune at one season than at another ? Instances have been given to show that something of this kind exists. The next question is whether they be the only ones ; and then follows the question, as to the extent to which they occur in English ; and, if they do, what they account for in the way of objectionable spelling.

SECTION XXXV.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS ADAPTED FOR A PHONETIC ORTHOGRAPHY.

Over and above the particular stage of a language into which a phonetic alphabet is introduced, is there anything in the structure of the language itself, upon which either an objection or a recommendation can be grounded?

We have said already much about the facts of language; treating them as potent, influential, and sometimes irresistible forces which determine certain results independent of any artificial or spontaneous conventionalities in the way of representation. It would, then, be a suicidal argument to hold that any language in the world was so constituted as to make a natural and simple orthography, an orthography limited to the mere representation of sounds and combinations as they actually exist, impossible. On the other hand, however, it would be a wilful neglect of patent and well-known facts to deny that, in the adaptability of languages to such an expression, there are degrees. Some languages lend themselves to it spontaneously, others are not amenable to its treatment; except at the price of a contrast between one modification of a word and another. Thus, a language that, for instance, forms its genitive in the syllable *es* or *is* is less disturbed in the spelling of its inflections than one which merely adds the single letter *s*. This is because, in the former case, it does not matter in what kind of a consonant the radical part of the word ends. Whether the root end in *b* or *p*, *t* or *d*, *k* or *g*, we can add *is* without superinducing any further change. If, however, we merely add the sound of *s*, a change must take place, and one of the two consonants must be accommodated or assimilated to the other; in other words, we must, if the word be *slab*, write either *slabz* or *slaps*; if *knot* either *knots* or *knodz*. Combinations like *knotz* or *knods* can be, without doubt, written and seen, but they can neither be heard nor uttered. Such is our first instance of the Law of Assimilation, and we shall see that it goes a long way. Now the operation of this gives us one of the commonest and most prominent facts in the English language. It is the rule of the formation of both the genitive case and the plural number of our substantives. Yet we dispense with the phonetic exhibition of it, and write *stags* for *stagz*. Here, then, is a fact which would undoubtedly complicate the rules for the formation of two of the most important inflections in our language if they extended to our spelling; but it is, also, one which, as far as several centuries of experience teach us, we may ignore in our speaking. Doubtless, it is neither more nor less than an instance of the insufficiency of our orthography. As far, however, as it goes, it is evident that we can get a large amount of work out of an insufficient one; and this is an argument that a conservative may fairly make use of. But the antagonism

may go farther. There may be cases where the letter *s* (that is, the sound represented by it) may be tacked-on, *immediately*, to a word in *b* or *d*, while the sound of *z* is wholly wanting to the language itself. In such a case it is evident that the latter of the two sounds cannot exist; so that no change, accommodation or assimilation can be effected in that direction. Hence the *b* must be changed into *p*, and the *d* into *t*. But this affects the radical, or fundamental, part of the word, and, by so doing, does much towards disguising its nature; since the combination must now come out *slaps*, etc. The English language does not, indeed, go so far as this. If it did, however, the result would be as has been indicated. Now this is the way by which the *last* part of a word, if such be the habit of the language, may be metamorphosed.

Let us now ask whether the *middle* part of a word can be thus affected? The best way of illustrating this is to take some language which gives us such affections as a general rule. By this we measure the extent of its influence. The following is from Euren's "Finlandic Grammar." It is not exactly an extract; it is rather an abstract. It gives us, however, the real details of a very important and relevant process.

The *hard* (this is the Swedish term) vowels are, *a, o, u*; the *mild*, *ä, ö, y*; the *light*, *e, i*.

The Vocal Harmony (*vokal harmoni*) means that the *hard* vowels (*a, o, u*) can never follow or precede any *mild* one (*ä, ö, y*), in a non-compound word. The *light* ones (*e, i*) can follow or precede both; but a *light* vowel in the radical part of the word requires to be followed by a *mild* one: as *talolla, ottavat; tylsällä, kyntävät*; and, from *tie, mies, tie-llä, miehe-nä*. Hence, words have two kinds of endings; one with a *hard*, and another with a *mild* vowel; *i.e.*, with *hard* vowels in the root a *hard* ending, and with *mild* ones either a *mild* or a *light* one.

The *light* vowels are our old friends the *small* or *slender* ones.

Here the character of the vowel which follows is determined by that of the vowel which precedes.

But in the Gaelic the influence is reversed, and *small* endings give rise to *small* vowels in the root: a process which affects the middle syllable. Thus—

A, o, are called *broad* vowels, . . . *e* and *i* *small* . . . The poets, in latter ages, devised a rule, which prescribes that the vowel which goes before a consonant, must be of the same class with that which follows that consonant, *i.e.*, both broad or both small. *Neilson's Introduction to the Irish Language*.

That this assimilation is not found in the older manuscripts is specially stated; but it is not stated that this is not a fact in the spoken language as well as in the existing orthography. And in both it is a fact. The same change, in a more artificial form, occurs in the German under the names of "*umlaut*," or "*about-sound*;" and this, like the Irish assimilation, is not found in the Mæso-gothic, or the German in its oldest known form.

This, then, tells us how the *middle* part of a word may be affected.

Now let us ask what the Keltic languages teach us as to the alterations of the next *beginnings* of words. Any elementary work on the Welsh (where there are no true case-endings) tells how the first consonant of a word is modified according to its place in a sentence. Thus—

Câr, *kinsman*.
dy Gâr = *thy kinsman*.
fy Nghâr = *my kinsman*.
ei Châr = *her kinsman*.

Pen, *head*.
dy Ben, *thy head*.
fy, Mhen, *my head*.
ei Phen, *her head*.

and so on, with variations according to the consonant with which the word begins. Now the Welsh, phonetically, is one of the best-spelt languages in the world. But, if we can bring ourselves to imagine what it would have been had it been written in the manner of the English, and (what is a lighter effort) imagine that the reform had been deferred till the present moment, it is evident that the Welsh conservative might appeal to the etymological doctrine with more cogency than the English one. There are degrees, then, in the validity, or, as the Phonetician would say, in the plausibility of the objections on the score of etymology; the etymology being that which is limited to the single language to which it applies. There is nothing in any one of these instances which touches the question of the propriety of spelling *city* with a *c* on the ground of its representing the *c* in the foreign word *civitas*. Of the ground, however, to which it is limited, it covers a great deal.

Now the orthography of an allied language, the Irish, has not been reformed; and here we find an attempt to combine the etymological principle with the phonetic. The Welsh sacrifices the former to the latter, and *changes* the radical consonant. The Irish *preserves* it; but prefixes the letter, or its equivalent, (which in Welsh displaces it,) and gives us a rule by which it is said to be *eclipsed*; i.e., written, but treated in speaking, as if it were non-existent. Hence, the following table,

b	is eclipsed by	m, ar mbaile, <i>our town</i> , sounded ar maile
c		g, ar gceart, <i>our right</i> , sounded ar geart
d		n, ar ndia, <i>our God</i> , sounded ar nia
f		bh, ar bhfearran, <i>our land</i> , sounded, ar bhearran
g		n, ar ngearran, <i>our complaint</i> , sounded ar nearran
p		b, ar bpein, <i>our punishment</i> , sounded ar bein
s		t, ar tsalat, <i>our rod</i> , sounded ar tlat
t		d, ar dteine, <i>our fire</i> , sounded ar deine

Now, however meanly we may think of the value of the etymology which connects two words from different languages, like *city* and *civitas*; we must allow that, when we come to changes within the same languages, the etymological objection improves; and when we see such transformations in the radical parts of words as the pre-

céding, we must admit that its validity, or, to say the least, its plausibility, may vary with the language. I am not writing this to show that in any language it is actually valid. I am only showing that different languages are in different predicaments in respect to its applicability. And I only do this with the view of asking how the English stands in this respect. I submit that in respect to any of the above-mentioned languages, or as tested by any of the above-mentioned processes, it stands high. So far as the mixed character of its vocabulary goes, it is in a worse position. The phonetician condemns the etymological system *in toto*. It is well, however, that he should know how his own language, in the eyes of an opponent, and from his point of view, comports itself. The English is fitter for the application of the phonetic system than most languages; and, even when we weigh its demerits against its merits, as fit as any.

SECTION XXXVI.

ANALYSIS OF THE ETYMOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE.

The bearing of the instability of certain combinations, and certain points connected with the structure of numerous and important languages, has now received its full share of consideration; and, it is evident that upon the most important of the current objections to Phonetic Spelling—the Etymological—they have a very decided bearing. The number of scholars who hold that, though the phonetic system may suit some languages it is but ill-fitted for the English, is considerable. Now just so far as the English is a language in which there is a foreign element, this objection is plausible; and, as there is an inordinate proportion of foreign words in our tongue it has, to say the least, sufficient importance to command attention. Beyond this, there is but little in it. I have, perhaps, gone farther in this same etymology than usual; but I now wish to show that I have not gone farther than is necessary. Much that has been written, as the contents of the last four sections, has, perhaps, appeared irrelevant. But it is not this. The facts exhibited and the trains of reasoning suggested may, perhaps, have some import in themselves. But the main object of *their* exhibition is to show that they are only parts of a whole; only means to an end. However much they may, at the first view, appear to be something different, they are, in fact, preliminaries to the question as to the value of the etymological objection.

It will now be submitted to the reader that the ordinary objections which are involved in the word etymological, as it is generally applied, are mere fractions of the import of the term in its more general and more legitimate sense. The current objections are etymological so far as they hang loosely on the great subject of etymology; but as the representatives of etymology in its wider sense

they are mere chips in porridge. Nay, I will go farther than this; and add that they are objections which many an adept or master in the subject would hesitate to acknowledge. The distinction thus suggested, is of no small importance. There are two obstacles to Phonetic Reform which are of sufficient weight to counterbalance all the rest: and these are (1) the practical objection based upon the antagonism of an existing system; and (2) the theoretical, or scientific objection the name of which has already been often enough before us.

1. The first is so purely practical that the motto of its defenders might be, "Possession is nine parts of the law." There is an alphabet with its corresponding orthography that we are asked to either unlearn, or allow to fall into desuetude. This is a question of ejection; a question with which the abstractions of the proposed system have less to do than the number and strength of the supporters of the principle, which they propose as a substitute. These will be considered; but not at present.

2. The Etymological Principle, on the other hand, is one which is only criticized for the sake of disarming, or neutralizing, a certain amount of opposition. Its upholders are more remarkable for their influence than their numbers. They are, as a rule, men who speak with authority; and it cannot be denied that some of them have spoken both plainly and decidedly. The man who knows neither Latin nor Greek may oppose any innovation on the simple grounds of conservatism: pleading his unwillingness either to learn a strange, or to unlearn a familiar, alphabet: and against such a one there is but little room for argument. The etymologist, on the other hand, urges that the alteration is a bad thing in itself: that, it violates one of the conditions under which the present system works advantageously. He may, or may not, object to what Mr Ellis calls the "Double-trouble" difficulty. And, just in the same way, the man to whom etymology is only known as a name, may invoke it so far as it suits his own supineness. But these are mere accidents in the determination of both of them. Each goes on a different principle; and each on one which is characterized by the class to which its supporters belong.

Now etymology is a very wide field, and it will not be denied that the most of those who have been the readiest with the etymological objection have cultivated but a very small corner of it. Whether they would speak in the same tone if they were familiar with the whole domain is doubtful. Those who are inclined to speak of the ordinary strictures of the movement in favor of Phonetics with respect, and even tenderness, cannot but admit that nine-tenths of the current criticism is of a very insignificant and common-place character. It is compatible, indeed, as we know from experience, with considerable acumen, respectable powers of argument, and accurate scholarship: but it is also found in company with mere dilettanteism and sciolism;—sciolism and dilettanteism in which a little

Latin and less Greek go a long way. Now it is the authority which rests upon such grounds as these that we wish to reduce to its proper dimensions: and that by showing that it is the result of that dangerous and two-edged tool—a little learning. Let us see what it is; and then ask what we find in Etymology in its wider and fuller sense.

It is not urged by even the most zealous etymologist (so-called) that any appreciable advantage is derived from the existing system for more than three languages; the French, the Greek, and the Latin—the three foreign languages which most affect the English vocabulary: and a little consideration will tell us that, essentially, these three are one—the Latin. It is *from* the Latin that we finally deduce the greater part of our French, and *through* the Latin that we deduce the greater part of our Greek words. In nine cases out of ten when, by some sacrifice of the representation of an English sound, we make the French origin of a word a *visible* fact, we are only half-way in our history; since it has to be traced from the French to the Latin. If the spelling of the characteristic letter remain as in *cité* from *civitas*, unaltered and visibly recognizable—well and good. If, as in *chaîne* from *catena*, it undergoes a change—it is not so well. Hence, between the Latin and the French we get an imperfect representation in our etymology. “Only, however,” it may be answered “in a slight degree. Though we change the representation of the sound from *ch* to *c*, we preserve the *c*; and the *c* is the great Latin characteristic; the very key to the connection, the outward and visible sign of the ancestry, the blazon of the pedigree. How much better this than spelling *chain* with a wholly new combination; such as *ch* in English, or by some new invention of a single sign!”

We get the same thing over again when, from the Latin, we trace a word upwards to the Greek. Sometimes the characteristic letter is retained; but, sometimes, it is changed. This is notably the case with words which in their older form are written with Greek κ (*Kappa*). These in Latin are written with *c*. In this case the etymological principle, certainly, suffers an abatement: in fact it ends in merely giving us the language from which the word was *directly* and *immediately* introduced: a fact worth taking as a gift, but scarcely worth buying at a price.

But even if we are prepared to pay for it, by making the connection between the sound and the sign by which it is expressed obscure, who gains by it? Certainly not the reader who knows neither French nor Latin, neither Latin nor Greek. To him the change is merely gratuitous, or, in the original meaning of the word, impertinent. To him who knows the particular language from which the word is derived it is, unless his ear is so deficient as to need the help of his eye, a superfluity. This is a point upon which we cannot too strongly insist. In order to get any real or supposed advantage out of any orthographical expedient in the way of etymology of this

kind, a certain amount of an etymological character is required: and, in most cases, the amount of this is such as to make the supplementary aids and helps unnecessary. It is not, perhaps, always the case; for there are, doubtless, some who have raised the voice in defence of what is to them a real necessity; some who actually want the little extra assistance which a piece of unphonetic spelling may, occasionally, drop on their way. I do not, however, find that they tell us so: and it is possible that many of them might not like to be accused of being personally interested in the matter. It is in behalf of others that they profess to fight the battle. The others, however, are, as a rule, neither the better nor the worse for their advocacy. Upon the whole, however, we may say that those who cry most for these aids to etymology least require them.

But when we get them, to the extent (at least) that we have them in English what do they amount to. We have seen, or rather we have tried to see, whom they benefit. But what are they in themselves? It is not pretended that they extend to more than three languages; and we have seen how inconsistently they present themselves in these. With every language, where the alphabet is wholly different from ours, they are, of course, out of the question: and, all what are called the oriental languages are in this predicament. The one, among these, which is of most importance is the Arabic; because from this we get several words connected with chemistry and astronomy: and, besides these, a few, through Spanish or Portuguese of general meaning, e.g., *alcove*. Now, small as this latter class is, it is large enough to raise a question, and to introduce a distinction: for *alcove*, on etymological principles should be spelt with a *c*: inasmuch as though Arabic in origin, it comes to us *via* Spain. But how are we to write *Alkali*? Speaking in the present year, we may, probably, say that the orthography is settled, and that *k* is the right letter. But we could not have said so at the beginning of the century; nor, indeed, for many years later: since *c* was then in favor. But even this will carry us no great way. What are we to do with the guttural variety of the letter? I cannot say. I only know that *alcohol* and *almanac* are perplexing words.

Surely then, we may say that the etymological objection, as we find it in the arguments of most of the objectors, is applied to, and based upon, a very small portion of the subject. Now the evidence upon this point is what the last four sections have prepared us for. They have been far more etymological in their character than they look. More than one of the limitations of the phonetic system has been thoroughly so,—for instance, the transformation of *avis* into *avir* in Monier Williams's illustration of the Sanskrit rule of *Sandhi*. The whole question of Unstable Combinations has the same character. They both deal with the changes that certain parts of certain words undergo, and what is this but a question of etymology, of history, and of descent; or, to put it in a more general form, of

the likeness or unlikeness with which different degrees of descent are accompanied ?

Now, for readers who are wholly ignorant of any language but their own, the etymological system is useless ; except so far as by degrading certain conventional modes of spelling (e.g., the *ch* in *archdeacon*, the *sch* in *schism* and a few others) to the rank of a prompter's cue, or a printer's catchword, and telling the reader that, whenever these combinations are found he may lay odds in favor of the word in which they occur being of Greek origin, we get a little rough information out of them : and this we now remark, is the characteristic of that particular form of etymology which deals with words belonging to more languages than one. The class is natural ; as we see by the contrast it exhibits with its opposite in this very respect. Where the connection lies within the limits of a single language—that language being, of course his own—there is an etymology which an unlearned man may understand ; for etymology here means the different forms which the same word may take according to its change of meaning. But it is just this kind of etymology that few care to defend. The connection between *ken* and *can* is left to take care of itself : whereas, that between *chain* and *catena* must be taken care of by its friends. There is inconsistency in this. But it is not wholly inexplicable. There is a difference between a common-place piece of knowledge and an accomplishment. There is a difference between useful work and dilettanteism. There is a difference between the kitchen furniture and articles of *virtu*. There is a difference between the useful arts and the fine arts. Now it is with the fine arts and with the objects that interest the virtuoso that classical scholarship takes its place ; and the class is a high one. It may be said, however, without offence, that in the fine arts there is more display than in the useful ; and the same is the case with classical, as opposed to domestic, etymology.

This difference, then, between domestic and foreign etymology is, if not overlooked, at least undervalued. The former, which is of twice the importance of the latter, gets less than half the consideration. Domestic, however, is a term which with a little latitude we may conveniently extend to the languages of the German family in general,—the languages more especially allied to our own. Of these we may say that what applies to *ken* and *can*, applies to *can* and *kennen* (German) and *kjende* (Danish). But it is simply a waste of time and paper to show that, in the case of *c* and *k*, the precedents established by the Teutonic and Scandinavian languages in favor of the latter sign far outweigh those deducible from the Latin in support of the former.

Again, it has been already stated that when we go out of our way and divert orthography from its proper function of symbolizing a sound to that of suggesting an etymology ; and when we flatter ourselves that, in so doing, we are preserving the history and registering the changes that such or such a word has undergone, we simply

deceive ourselves with a half truth. We preserve the likeness ; but we conceal the difference : a preservation which, of course, gives us only half the real history of the word. The spelling which will give us the whole has yet to be discovered. This, however, is certain, that when we betake ourselves to a letter which has no value as the sign of an existing sound, for the sake of showing that the word in which it occurs has preserved enough of its former self to be recognizable, we use the alphabet for a secondary purpose ; and, when we do this to the detriment of its proper functions ; we misuse it. On the other hand, when we simply take a word as we find it, we have no need of any such detrimental makeshift. We have simply to spell a word as it is sounded. It may have gone through many, or it may have gone through few changes. It may not have been changed at all. At any rate, so long as we have nothing beyond its present pronunciation to express we have nothing to do but to put our alphabet to its proper use.

Now it is possible that, with the whole field of etymology before us, we might find good reasons not only for not upholding the ordinary etymological objection—the objection founded on the concealment of likeness—but for condemning it as one-sided and injurious ; in which Phoneticism would be enlisted on the side of etymology. I cannot say to what extent this view will actually be taken ; for, at present, it commands little attention. I am only sure of this ; that those who take it will take from their knowledge rather than their ignorance ; and that it will not be defended by arguments which can be contemptuously set aside. “I,” says Caius, “condemn the proposed innovations because they would obliterate the connection between the different stages in the history of a word ; and, by so doing, fail to give us those permanent characters which indicate its origin.” And “I,” says Titius, “condemn the existing system because, by concealing the full extent of the change that such words have undergone, it invests a combination with a show of permanence as a fact in language, which is wholly unreal.” There are two aspects, then, for this part of the subject.

The bearing of the remarks upon the instability of combinations still stands over for explanation. They are closely connected with the etymological principle ; and through this they lead to a question of some difficulty—that of the Fixation of a language. It is clear that if the tendencies, not only towards change but towards change in a certain direction, which were pointed out in the series *ka, kia, kya ; ga, gia, gya*, etc., be true, and still more if they are capable of being generalized, we have something like the means of guessing with some approach to accuracy not only what a word *has* been, but what it *will* be ; or, to use the words of a great scholar, we may say not only whence a word is come but whither it is going. There is, then, the etymology that simply reads the past history of words, and the etymology which constructs their future. In respect to the results of the two methods, there is not so much difference as we

may expect. The prospective etymology is more conjectural; but, with the present deficient record, there is plenty of conjecture in our retrospects. Neither is there much difference between the amount of acquired knowledge and mental aptitudes required for the respective studies of the prophet and the historian. It is possible that the prophetic may be the higher faculty. It is manifest, however, that the etymologist who looks in both directions is a better judge of what is good and bad in an alphabet in respect to its application or non-application to his subject, than the etymologist who sees only what lies behind him. I may do the objectors injustice; but the faculty of looking both towards the past and the future has not yet made itself conspicuous in their objections.

SECTION XXXVII.

REPRESENTATION AND FIXATION.

When the phonetic system is carried on to its ultimate results there is nothing to be said about such a thing as the Fixation of a language. Representation is the sole function of phoneticism. It is representative or nothing: and, when it is exclusively representative, fixation is simply a contradictory term. On the other hand, if representation mean, purely and simply, the reproduction to the eye of the sounds that fall upon the ear; and that without respect to the number or the influence of the speakers that utter them; and, also, without respect to their permanence, we can scarcely call this the representation of a *language*. Those who most love individuality well know that for a language to be worth spelling at all, it must possess *some* unity and *some* permanence. With fluctuating pronunciations it will have something to do: with transitional ones much. Ephemeral ones it will treat as such. Obsolete ones it knows how to deal with. With premature ones it has a difficult task. The general tendencies of a language will, sooner or later, get their own way. What comes from interference with them them is better shown than I can show it, in the following extract; which gives us the opinions of two critics. There is more in Dr Ingleby's notice than in Morgan's letter (for it is founded, partly, on one to the *Athenæum*); but I have the best authority for saying that, while it *represents* the opinion of the author of the notice, it does not *misrepresent* that of the subject. A premature stereotype of a transitional pronunciation has a re-action as well as an action; for it helps to fulfil its own accomplishment. It interferes with the natural tendencies of the language—in all cases, I believe, for a time only. But the interference, itself, is an interruption. It is not, however, an unmixed evil. It gives, as a set-off, a register of the change. This, however, is a sacrifice to etymology.

I think that, with this admission, the *pro's* and *con's* of this very perplexing case are fairly weighed against one another. The ex-

tract is from "Modern Logicians—The late Augustus de Morgan," by C. M. Ingleby, and it runs thus—

The practical had a charm for De Morgan. Many projects he viewed with favor, to which, however, he would give no support, because he regarded them as impracticable. The decimal system of coinage received his advocacy because he believed it was feasible, as well as theoretically good. To duodecimals, he gave no encouragement, because he believed that they could never be made to supersede decimals, notwithstanding his conviction that, if adopted, they would prove more convenient than the prevalent numerical system. Though strongly given to the archæological parts of literature, he was no blind opponent to the system of phonetic spelling, inaugurated by the *Phonetic News*. As a practical man he recognized but one objection, viz., the existence of the present system. His way of explaining himself was that on the theoretical side of the question there were no objections; if the thing could be got it should be got. He not only looked with favor on the scheme of *visible speech* put forth by Mr A. Melville Bell, but joined with Sir David Brewster and Mr Alex. J. Ellis in recommending its adoption. He was not imposed upon by the extremely shallow objection to any phonetic scheme, that its adoption would endanger the historical continuity of the language it is employed to represent. De Morgan saw plainly that the English language is undergoing a revolution of the worst kind; not so much from the introduction of vulgarisms, Americanisms, or neologisms, as from pedantic orthoepisms. Every child who is taught to read augments the prevailing tendency to pronounce strictly according to the spelling in vogue, i.e., to introduce arbitrary sounds never heard before in any stage of development of the language. Such sounds are not determined by the laws of speech, but by a remote chain of causes, acting through the laws of combination of certain written symbols, and therefore not adapted for the purposes of speech. The only two courses by which this mischievous tendency can be arrested are these—to prevent children from learning to read; or to give them a phonetic literature.

Now in cases of this kind the Man for the Hour is the one who looks forwards as well as backwards. He cannot tell us, for the actual moment, which pronunciation prevails. But he can tell us which (if we *must* do anything in the way of fixation) is the one to choose. One gives us the language of, at least, some of our contemporaries, and, perhaps, some of our ancestors; the other gives us that of our posterity. Neither may be permanent. Which, however, will last the longest is self-evident.

SECTION XXXVIII.

THE EARLY ALPHABETS OF THE BRITISH ISLANDS.

Here begins a new division of our subject; one mainly historical. It treats of the conditions of time and place when the first alphabet of Latin origin was introduced into Western Europe. We must look for the country of its introduction in the west and north, rather than in the south and east; because, in the latter, the language or at least the literary one, was more or less Latin. This brings us to Germany and the British Isles. The oldest German alphabet (of which more will be said in the sequel) was *Greek*: but this applies only to the German of the continent. In the British Isles there

was a British Church, and this, whatever else it may have been, was earlier than the Anglo-Saxon.

We may, then, safely begin with the statement that the language of Western Europe which has the oldest alphabet, exclusively of Latin origin, is either the Welsh or the Irish; in other words, the oldest alphabet of this class that we know is that which is due to the British Church in its most general form; *i.e.*, the church of the British Islands, the church of the insular Kelts, the church of the Britons or the Gaels—one or both. This is, in the first instance, (save certain exceptions standing over for notice) an inference from the universal connection between the introduction of Christianity and the introduction of the alphabet, but it is strengthened by the evidence of history, and by the agreement between the Keltic and the Anglo-Saxon alphabets. In continental Germany we find the letter *k* instead of *c*. In the British Isles, whether Great Britain or Ireland, we find *c* in the place of *k*. We find the same in the earlier Icelandic manuscripts; though, at present, as the result of German influences, *k* has superseded it. Whether this Anglo-Saxon alphabet was taken from the Latin direct or from one of the British forms of it is a question upon which we may profitably pause a little; for it suggests a distinction. The actual form of the letters is one thing, the principle upon which they were extended from the Latin to the Keltic is another. The first of these points is unimportant: for the independent existence of the Irish as a separate alphabet had not lasted long enough to engender any notable discrepancies between the copy and the prototype. The principles, however, of its application to either the Irish or the British language are matters upon which much depends.

We must not, now, be surprised if the two irrepressibles again display themselves—*k* and *c*: if between two alphabets of Latin origin there may be a difference: inasmuch as one may have been formed upon a model so purely and exclusively Latin as to ignore the *k* altogether, whereas the other may have been formed under circumstances where the recognition of the *k* was possible.

Now it is submitted that it was upon a Latin model of the extreme and exclusive character that rejected the *k*, that the Anglo-Saxon alphabet was founded; while that of the Germans was founded upon one which contained it: and this means that what we may call a false start at the very beginning is one of the main causes of the bad conditions of the English orthography in the present advanced stage of its history. It was framed upon the worse of two imperfect models, the Greek and the Latin; and, in the Latin group, from the least fit of its members. This was the case whether the Anglo-Saxon alphabet was derived directly from the Latin, or indirectly, *i.e.*, through the alphabet of what we may call the Keltic Church; British or Irish as the case may be.

Now, at the present moment, both the Irish and the English have, as far as the details connected with the shape of the letters go, two

alphabets—one old, the other new. There are Anglo-Saxon works, which institutions so modern as the Society of Antiquaries and the Record office, have printed in the Anglo-Saxon characters; though the less conservative publishers write Anglo-Saxon with the exception of the two distinctive letters, $\text{þ} = th$, and $\text{ð} = dh$; and print in the ordinary English letters; just as some of the Germans and Danes print in both the old black letter, and the more modern italic. The Swedes, however, have nothing to say to the black letter, and use the italic either exclusively or as the rule. The Irish do the same as the Germans and the Danes; and sometimes print in the older, sometimes in newer type. It is, I believe, a sign of nationality to use the former; and sometimes we may see the strange contrast in nominally English printing, of the words common to both languages in the modern, or Saxon, and the proper names, characteristic of Ireland, in the old, or native type. Whether the result be a handsome page or the contrary is another question. The fact to which attention is directed is that of the old Irish type and the Anglo-Saxon being convertible. It would not, perhaps, be difficult to say whether a work of King Alfred were printed in type meant for the meridian of Dublin, or in one for that of London. The general form, however, of the letters is so nearly identical, that Anglo-Saxon may be read in Gaelic and Gaelic in Anglo-Saxon types.

The native Irish, Erse, or Gaelic alphabet has—

1. No *h*. No Irish word begins with it; and, though we find more than enough of it, in the Anglo-Irish type as a sign of the so-called aspiration, it is only in this equivocal character that it presents itself. What the Anglo-Irish type gives as *bh*, etc., the true Irish of the manuscripts gives as *ḃ*. This, at first, looks like the Greek (·): but this it is not. It came in by degrees; *i.e.*, some letters took it before others.

2. No *j*.

3. No approach, from first to last, to a *k*.

4. No *q*.

5. Nothing beyond *u*.

This, which reduces the Irish letters to seventeen, suggests that the framers of the alphabet took from Latin just the unequivocal and unambiguous letters; just the letters they could not do without; the letters which they could manage, without difficulty, and without either refinements or expedients. This, though a good principle to begin with, is a bad one to go on with. We have seen how the (·) over certain consonants, came to pass as a sign of aspiration, and out of this the later grammarians devised a class of mutable consonants, from which only *l*, *n*, and *r* were excluded. Then came the distinction between broad and small vowels; and then the law of assimilation: upon which we have already enlarged. Then came, what has also been enlarged on, the expedient of ecthlipsis: in all of which we see the elements of a very complicated orthography. The necessity of the alternative between phonetic spelling and

some such expedient as the one just mentioned was the misfortune rather than the fault of the Irish orthography. It was due to the nature of the language. But the worst of all was the particular form of the vocalic assimilation. The law of assimilation for the vowels of different syllables, following or preceding one another, was Small and Small, Broad and Broad. If this only meant that one vowel was to be substituted for another the case would have been neither better nor worse than that which we illustrated from the Finlandish. But instead of simple substitution the original vowel was, in many cases, retained, and an adventitious or supererogatory vowel added to it. The effect of this was to convert half the vowels in the language, so far as the eye was concerned, into diphthongs: and when, at point of contact between the two syllables we get, at the same time, an ecthlipsis, the result is startling. Thus *lam'*, or *lamh* = *hand*; while *geal* = *white*; and the Gaelic for *white-handed* is *laimheal*. The effect of this was, (so to say) to make vowels cheap: one or two more or less in a syllable being of no great consequence. No wonder, then, that in an Irish grammar (Neilson's is the one I quote from, which, for this purpose, is all the better for being an old one) we have such entries as the following.

There are thirteen diphthongs:—

Sound.	Example.
<i>ae</i> long, as <i>ai</i> in <i>pain</i>	<i>lae</i> , of a <i>day</i>
<i>ai</i> long and distinct	<i>cáin</i> , a <i>fine</i>
short, as <i>i</i> in <i>fight</i> , etc.	<i>mait</i> , <i>good</i> , etc.

Now, as the short vowels are not counted in the thirteen, the whole number amounts to twenty-one.

Then, there are five triphthongs, *aoi*, *eoí*, *iai*, *iui*, and *uai*: the great merit of which is that they are always long.

The vowel part is the worst part of the Irish alphabet. There are no rules for it. Ecthlipsis, indeed, is bad enough; but for this there *are* rules.

The cause of all this imperfection is manifest. There was no misappropriation of letters. There was no sacrifice to the etymological principle as taken in its ordinary sense. There was simply incompleteness of the alphabet. Yet, as compared with the English, the Irish is almost a well-ordered orthography, and this is mainly because the etymological principle was eschewed. It took *c* no doubt; but it excluded, and still excludes, *k*. In this it has its advantage over the English. In having no antiquated forms to retain, it has the advantage over the French.

SECTION XXXIX.

THE EARLY ALPHABETS OF THE GERMAN—THE MÆSO-GOTHIC ALPHABET.

We now turn from the early alphabets of the British Isles to those of Germany; where we shall find a noble landmark in our chronology—the Ulphiline Gospels. Ulphilas was born between A.D. 325, the year of the Council of Nice, and A.D. 348; and he died at Constantinople A.D. 388. He was a bishop of the Goths. These Germans were the Germans of the districts on each side of the Lower Danube. They had cut their way thus far eastward. They had firmly fixed themselves in parts of Moldavia and Wallachia, and had founded a kingdom, or, at least, under Hermanrik had become a formidable and independent nation. But they were pressed upon by the Huns, and in the reign of Valens, A.D. 376, were, either wholly or to a great extent, constrained to cross the Danube. Here they spread themselves over the province of Mæsia, from which they afterwards extended themselves, either as Visigoths, or as Ostrogoths, to Italy, to Gaul, and to Spain; in all three of which countries they founded kingdoms.

Of these Goths, Ulphilas was the bishop; and to some extent he was their missionary as well; though the details of their conversion as a nation, are obscure. They were Arians.

Of the languages of Germany the first that was reduced to writing was that of these Goths—the Goths of Mæsia as they are often called; their language being called the Mæso-gothic. And the one great Mæso-gothic writer is Ulphilas. Of a translation, by him, of the whole or a large part of the Bible, though much is lost, the Gospels, in an incomplete state, have come down to us. There are other portions of the Scripture as well; but these are mere fragments. Over and above these there are a few other fragments; chiefly referable to the times of the Ostrogothic rule in Italy. The language and the alphabet are the same throughout: and, upon the latter, there is much to be said. The manuscripts which contain the Uphiline gospels, the pride and glory of the library of the University of Upsala, is one of the most famous in the world. It is entirely in capitals—large, bold, and standing apart from each other like those of a well-cut inscription. So marvelously regular is the writing that it has been supposed that each letter was separately *stamped*; and, although the evidence of those who are familiar with printing has set aside this doctrine, it required more than ordinary care to discover any difference between them. The manuscript itself is a tinted vellum—of a purple or mulberry colour. The letters themselves are silvered, and at the beginning of sections, gilded over with great care and regularity. Such is the famous Codex Argenteus, which contains the Ulphiline translations of the Gospels in the language of the Goths of Mæsia.

The language itself is old not only in respect to the age of the writing by which it is illustrated, but old in respect to its structure ; though the statement that it stands to the modern German and Dutch in the same relation as the Latin to the Italian and Spanish is an exaggeration. It ceased, however, to be cultivated, and, possibly to be spoken, after the middle of the seventh century ; and, as we know it only as the language of certain districts conquered by the Goths, we are unable to say, to a certainty, from what part of Germany it was derived. The dialects which come nearest to it are held to be those of Thuringia ; but there are none which stand to it in a direct and undoubted line of descent.

Neither Mœsia, then, nor the country beyond the Danube (Moldavia and Bessarabia) was the native country of its German occupant ; and as both lay within the limits of the Eastern Empire, and were governed from Constantinople rather than from Rome, the Mœso-gothic alphabet is of Greek origin. The Goths, however, who adopted it on the Danube might easily have carried it with them westwards, even to the Rhine : for we know that in Italy, Spain and Gaul, there were Gothic kingdoms. Now the recognition of the *k* in the *Frank* alphabet as opposed to its exclusion from the Anglo-Saxon, I mainly refer to the existence of the Mœso-gothic literature, (scanty as it was,) and the connection between the histories of France and the districts on the Lower Danube in which the first Gothic converts to Christianity were settled.

Not much later than the Goths of Mœsia, the Burgundians received Christianity ; and, then, the Franks. The Burgundians were Arian ; the Franks orthodox. Of the Burgundian alphabet we know nothing ; indeed we only infer its existence from the fact of Burgundy being Christian. It is possible, then, that the Franks may have learned the art of writing from the tribe which, though Arian, had an earlier orthography than their own. But it is also possible that they may have taken it direct from the Latin ; ignoring their brethren as heretics. This question, will repeat itself in Britain.

We thus see that the Christianization of Germany and that of Britain, must have run nearly parallel in time : and this, with the alphabet which is assumed to be concurrent with it, would give us an incipient British literature, as early as the fifth century.

The *names* of the Mœso-gothic letters are unknown. Their order is that of the Greek ; and, as dependent upon this, their value as numerals. The Greek Digamma was represented by a letter of which the sound was that of *q* ; the Greek Eta by H—a Latinism. Theta, Θ, was written Ψ, and Psi, or the letter that stood in its place, as Ο ; a pair of forms which suggest a transposition. In the place of *xi*,—60 as a number,—stood a letter with the shape of the cursive capital *G* ; and the sound of either that letter or of *y*. Omicron, with a change of form, had the power of *u*—so that we now see that between this letter and H for Eta, the Greek distinction between the long and short vowels has disappeared. For *q*

stood a letter, like the Russian *У*, of uncertain import. We know, however, its position by its numerical power—90. Sigma was written *S* as in Latin. Hypsilon, with its pointed base, was more like a *У* than a *U*, and, is considered to have been so sounded; or, if not as *v*, as *w*. *S* has the form of the *Latin* letter.

Now Ulphilas, to whom these Goths owed their alphabet, died during the fourth century; and within the first ten years of the fifth, the Visigoths had founded their kingdoms in the south of Gaul and in Spain. The conquerors of Italy about fifty years later were the Ostrogoths, and it is universally admitted that the language of this division was that of the Ulphiline Gospels. The evidence that the language of the Visigoths, in Gaul and Spain was the same is less conclusive. There is no reason, however, to doubt the fact of its having been so. The conversion of the Anglo-Saxon population of Britain is referred to the last year of the fifth century, and to the influence of Frank teachers. But before this there was, in Britain considered as a country, the Christianity of the British Church. Now in connecting this old British alphabet—Welsh and Irish—with the Anglo-Saxon, I do not do so as against the Latin. The Anglo-Saxon might, doubtless, have been founded exclusively on the Latin. It might, also, have been founded on the British; but subjected to modifications from the Latin. This implies a second influence; and, in respect to this, I merely urge that this second influence, if it existed, was not Frank, but British. I hold that the early alphabets of Germany, of which the Frank must have been the most important, had Greek elements which the British and Anglo-Saxon had not.

SECTION XL.

THE ANGLO-SAXON ALPHABET.

There are two ways by which an alphabet may make its way into a country. It may, like the Mæso-gothic or Armenian, be introduced as a systematic whole; or it may grow up imperceptibly, without any definite system, and with no particular constructor. In our own time this latter mode of development is scarcely possible, because it is the practice of missionaries to address their hearers, as much as possible, in the language of the country to which they belong. Neither do they press upon them their books in English, so much as tracts and translations in their own vernacular. The missionary system of Rome was different. Such reading as was taught was in Latin; and the reading of anything other than Latin was exceptional. This practice was unfavorable to the composition of purely native works. There was a way, however, by which Latin composition could be partially popularized: and this was by something partaking of the nature of a translation, but yet falling short of one;—a system of interlining, in which there was every degree of closeness or

laxity. Sometimes there was a full translation of a sentence : sometimes the mere interspersion of an occasional Gloss. A very little system would suffice for an alphabet of this kind. The form and power of a certain number of letters might be picked out of the Latin text : and used just as the occasion presented them. The commonest would be most in use ; and rarer ones wholly unrecognized. In this way a systematic alphabet would be a long time in growing ; and, so doing, exist in its rudiments long before it came to be recognized in its integrity.

Between A.D. 400, when the Mæso-gothic alphabet may have been known in Gaul, and A.D. 600, when the Frank missionaries preached to the Anglo-Saxons, there was room for the gradual formation of more alphabets than one ; though of none is the exact origin known : the Mæso-gothic of which alone this can be predicated being of Greek origin. The earliest specimens of both the Irish and the British vernaculars are in the form of Glosses ; and very nearly the same may be said of those of the German and Anglo-Saxon.

The following table enables us to compare the four alphabets :—

	<i>English.</i>		<i>Latin.</i>		<i>Anglo-Saxon.</i>		<i>Irish.</i>
1.	A a	...	a	...	a	...	a
2.	B b	...	b	...	b	...	b
3.	C c	...	c	...	c	...	c
4.	D d	...	d	...	d	...	d
5.	E e	...	e	...	e	...	e
6.	F f	...	f	...	f	...	f
7.	G g	...	g	...	g	...	g
8.	H h	...	h	...	h	...	h
9.	I i	...	i	...	i	...	i
10.	J j	...	j	...	—	...	—
11.	K k	...	k (rare)	...	—	...	—
12.	L l	...	l	...	l	...	l
13.	M m	...	m	...	m	...	m
14.	N n	...	n	...	n	...	n
15.	O o	...	o	...	o	...	o
16.	P p	...	p	...	p	...	p
17.	Q q	...	q	...	—	...	—
18.	R r	...	r	...	r	...	r
19.	S s	...	s	...	s	...	s
20.	T t	...	t	...	t	...	t
21.	U u	...	u	...	u	...	u
22.	V v	...	v	...	—	...	—
23.	W w	...	w	...	w	...	—
24.	X x	...	x	...	x	...	—
25.	Y y	...	y	...	y	...	—
26.	Z z	...	z	...	—	...	—
27.	—	...	—	...	þ	...	—
28.	—	...	—	...	ð	...	—
29.	—	...	—	...	æ	...	—

The sufficiency, or insufficiency, of the Anglo-Saxon alphabet must be measured by the number and nature of the sounds which it had to represent. This is scarcely to be done without a certain amount of hypothesis and speculation. The opinion of the present writer who, unwillingly, differs from many of his predecessors, is that the proportion of letters to the sounds is not below that of the average alphabets; certainly above that of Irish; and, perhaps, comparable with that of the Mæso-gothic. But this view implies that about the seventh century the sounds which we now represent by *j* and *z*, were, then, either non-existent or rare: in other words that they have been developed in the interval. With the sound of *tsh* the same is held to have been the case; and, unless several of the preceding sections have been written in vain, the process by which a word spelt *Ceaster* has now become *Chester* has been foreshadowed. But this is not even now spelt with a single letter. *J* and *z* at the beginning of words, are now confined to those of foreign origin: and *z*, which is only a common sound as the sign of number in the plurals like *stagz*, and the existence of which is ignored in the present spelling, has been accounted for. *Y*, probably, existed in the oldest forms of our language; but the difference between such a combination as *ee-o* and *yo* is of the slightest. Besides this, *y* grows out of *g*. So much for the sibilants, both simple and compound.

The guttural sounds of *kh* and *gh*, have, probably, been lost: at least, in the literary English.

Y as a semi-vowel seems to have been unknown. As a vowel it appears interchangeable in spelling with *i* and *e*, as in *gyt* = *yet*, *gehyrsam* and *gehirsam* (in German *gehorsam*) = *obedient*. Whether it had the sound of the French *u*, German *û*, and Scandinavian *y* is doubtful. The analogy of the allied languages is more in favor of this than the orthographical conditions under which it occurs. So far as it is a semi-vowel it seems to have been represented by *e*—*eow* = *you*, *eorl* = *earl* = Danish *jarl*, where the *j* = *y*. This is a point upon which I unwillingly differ from Mr Ellis. He argues against the semi-vowel power of *e* from its interchangeability with *ea*. But this assumes that it had only one power. He also argues against it from the small number of words beginning with *e*, followed by a vowel, where the sound is now that of *y*. This is true. But it is not from *e* as an initial that the point is to be determined. It is rather from the combination of *e* with *s*, *c*, and *sc* preceding it—as in *séo* = *she*; *sceat* = *shot*, (as in *pay your shot*; in *scot* and *lot*, the *k* sound is preserved,) and *Ceaster* = *Chester*. It is on this that the present writer mainly insists. Mr Ellis, however, is so far consistent that he thinks that the change to *sh* and *tsh* can be accounted for differently; by what he calls palatisation. This is the point upon which we are at issue. *Q* was expressed by *cw*; and *k*, in the original alphabet, was nowhere. The difference between *f* and *v* was not represented. Though *q* was ejected as super-

fluos, *x* was not. It had its present power of *ks*—*ricsian*, being sometimes written *rixian*.

The unsteadiness of the two sounds by which we denote the *th* in *thin* and the *th* in *thine* is a serious charge. So far as the signs were separate from one another, and both single, all was well. There were two sounds, and each of them was a simple one. There were, also, two letters; and each of them was simple also. But there was no steadiness in their import: inasmuch as either sign might be used for the expression of either sound; so that, of the two continuants of *t* and *d*, each had two signs. This is the very last inconsistency that we expect; for the origin of *ð* is, evidently, the letter *d*. Yet so it is. Of the two sounds the sonant is, in the present stage of language, the rarer: being, at the beginning of words, nearly limited to the words *that, these, those, thy, they, theirs, them, then, there*, and the article *the*. Yet in the Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic the spelling is with *þ*, as *þú* = thou, *þær* = there. Are we to suppose, then, that the sound has changed? Rask answers in the affirmative; for he remarks that though *þat*, = that, when written at length, is spelt both ways (i.e., *þæt* and *ðæt*) the abbreviated form is always *þ*. Upon this he lays more stress than, in my mind, it will bear. That *þ* is always found at the beginning of words, and that both in Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic, is more important: but even this fails to carry us over the whole difficulties of the question. "Some," writes Rask, "have considered one of these letters as superfluous, and Lye, who, however, bows to the opinion of Spelman and Somner, that *ð* was the hard (surd), and *þ* the soft (sonant) *th*, nevertheless considers them as the same letter." Later, indeed within the last two years, Mr Ellis admits the difficulty of the question. "What," he writes, "were the precise meanings of *þ*, *ð*, or rather how the meanings (*th*, *dh*) were distributed over them, it does not seem possible to elicit from the confused state of existing manuscripts."

If these views be true the demerits of the Anglo-Saxon alphabet are, so far as the consonants go, not above the average. In the vowels there seem to be some very serious deficiencies, both of omission and commission; and one, probably, as serious as all put together in the matter of mistribution; by which I mean classing two widely different sounds under the same head; or as the (so-called) long and short sounds of one another. This applies to the vowel *i*. I said *probably*; because as the case stands it is, by no means, certain. If we only knew how the contemporaries of Alfred sounded such words as *tíd* and *wín*, all would be clear: but he would be a bold man who would answer the question in either one way or another. Individually, I think that the words were sounded as we now sound them; or as *tide* and *wine*. So they are sounded in Germany—*zeit* and *wein*. But in Scandinavia the pronunciation is *teed*, and *veen*; or *tíd* and *vin*, *tíd* and *vín*. In the Scandinavian languages the diphthong (*ei* in German, *i* phoneti-

cally) is rare as an independent sound : though it is common enough as an educt from *-eg* : but this is only a secondary diphthong. We know that it has originated in a combination of a vowel and a consonant ; and we know what the consonant is. We have no knowledge of the origin of the *i* in *tíd* and *wím* : and there are numerous words besides of which we may say the same. Whether, however, the distribution be Anglo-Saxon or not, it is certain that we have it in the present English—and a very grave one it is.

Then there was a minor sort of confusion between *i* and *y*, already noticed ; and another, also already noticed, between *i* and *e*.

With all three of the broad vowels there was also confusion. Whether the language, or whether the ear of the framers, or upholders of the alphabet was at fault is uncertain : but between either the actual sound of the vowels or the representation of them, there was great indistinctness somewhere. It, probably lay with the language. In respect to *a*, the Scotch say *bane* and *stane*, the English *bone* and *stone*. In the Anglo-Saxon the spelling was *bán* and *stán*. When the vowel was short, there was the same indistinctness, and *hand* was, and has long continued to be, written *hand* and *hond*. In one of the latest contributions on the pronunciation of the Runes, the late Professor Munch of Christiana has shown that, even in the oldest, there was the same ambiguity. In both the present Danish and the present Swedish the sound of what is meant to be the genuine *o* is spelt with *a*—in Danish *staae*, in Swedish *stå*, *bål*. Meanwhile the ordinary *o* is intermediate to the English *o* and *oo*.

A notice of the Latin alphabet as the foundation of either the Anglo-Saxon or the German of the continent would be incomplete without a recognition of certain letters to which influential authorities have assigned a higher antiquity, and a more independent origin, than is here allowed ; though, here and elsewhere, considerable importance is attached to them—the German and Scandinavian, or Norse, Runes. The Runes (and it is in Scandinavia where they are best studied) fall into two classes ; those which are anterior to the introduction of Christianity, and those which are subsequent to it. The former are sixteen in number. The latter are the same as the older ones so far as they go ; but with certain additions to make up the number of the letters of the Latin alphabet which they are coined to represent. They are formed out of the earlier ones by diacritical marks, generally dots ; so that the older alphabet consists of the unpointed, the newer of the pointed and unpointed, Runes. As *Run* means a *secret*, or something whispered in the ear, it is probable that the art of reading them, was, at first, known to but few. The earliest are assigned to the ninth century A.D. The original Runes consist solely of straight lines ; as if they were meant for inscriptions and for nothing else.

Of the Runes the most important is the third : þ = *th* ; by name *Thurs* ; and also *Thorn* ; for out of this grew the Anglo-Saxon

letter þ = the Greek θ , the English *th*; as we have already seen. The sign for *w* is also believed to have a similar origin.

The Ogham characters, which in some degree bear the same relation to the Irish as the Runic does to the Anglo-Saxon alphabet, inasmuch as both are invested with a certain halo of mystery and antiquity, are of a very artificial construction; and are more truly of the nature of cyphers in the way of cryptography, or secret writing, than their German analogues. The Ogham characters, moreover, remind us of musical notation rather than of ordinary alphabetic writing. There is a long straight horizontal line, like those we see in copybooks; and upon, under, or across (*i.e.*, both under and over) this are certain short ones, equally straight, which according to their grouping by ones, or twos, or threes, etc., and by their relation to the base line, take their import as letters. Of those that lie both above and below the line some lie across it at right angles, others obliquely. The two alphabets which have commanded the most attention are (1) the *Beith-Luis* and (2) the *Bobel-Loth*; named after the letters with which they, respectively, begin. These letters are *twenty-four* in number, like the Latin; indeed, in this respect more so than the genuine practical vernacular one. So far, then, as this goes, the old Irish had *two* alphabets. The names of the letters are extremely fanciful. *Beith* = birch, and *Luis* = mountain-ash; and as these, so are the rest of the letters—named after trees. The *Bobel-Loth*, on the other hand, takes its names from the Bible; and *Bobel*, *Loth*, *Foronn*, *Davith*, *Talemon*, *Qualep*, etc. = *Babel*, *Lot*, *Pharaoh*, *David*, *Solomon*, *Caleb*, etc., figure as the names of letters.

Add to these the numerous inscriptions, both in Latin and Greek characters, sometimes found on stone monuments, but oftener on coins, (where we also get a date,) and we have a fair view of the condition of the alphabets of Western Europe between the middle of the fourth and the middle of the seventh century.

The little that need be added concerning that part of the Anglo-Saxon orthography which relates to accents I give in the words of Dr Bosworth, than whom no one has paid more attention to the subject. The evil influence of the French system of spelling, introduced by the Norman Conquest is here indicated; and certainly it is not exaggerated.

As the simplicity of the Anglo-Saxon accentuation has frequently been overlooked, or involved in a complicated system, it will tend to remove false impressions and to make the matter clear, by recollecting that the Anglo-Saxons only used one accent, which always indicated the long sound of the vowel over which it is placed. Our complicated system of English vowels arose from the Norman scribes, who first confused the Anglo-Saxon accents, and then attempted to supply their place by a multiplicity of vowels, which we have adopted, as will be seen by the following examples:—*Cwén*, a *cween*; *fét*, *feet*; *gés*, *geese*, etc.:—*Dic*, a *dike*; *lic*, *like*; *lim*, *lime*; *win*, *wine*; etc.:—*Bóc*, *book*; *fór*, *fore*, *before*; *gód*, *good*; *gós*, a *goose*; etc.:—*Dú*, *thou*, *hú*, *how*, *hús*, *house*; *mús*, *mouse*; etc.:—*Bryd*, a *bride*; *fýr*, *fire*; *mýs* *mice*. In all the instances the Anglo-Saxon is quite

plain and consistent, expressing the same sound by the same accented vowel, while the English employs different vowels for the same purposes as in *cween*, *geese*;—good, goose, fore; thou, how,, house and mouse. The greatest complication of vowels is seen in our expression of the long open sound of *o*, heard in *no* and *bone*. We use *oe*, *oa*, and *o* with a silent final *e*, while the Anglo-Saxons, in all cases, merely accented the *o* as—*Dá, a doe*; *fó, a foe*; *tá, a toe*.—*Bát, a boat*, *ác, an oak*, *fám, foam*, etc.—*Bán, a bone*, *stán, a stone*, etc. The super-abundant employment of English vowels is troublesome to natives and most perplexing to foreigners. On the contrary, the Anglo-Saxon system of accenting the long vowels is plain and definite.

SECTION XLI.

HISTORY OF THE ANGLO-SAXON ALPHABET.

In Dr Bosworth's remark upon the ignorance of the Norman scribes, we shall find nearly the whole of the remainder of the history of the Anglo-Saxon alphabet and orthography. We have indicated the faults in the original construction of it; we have seen how old a system it is; and we have hinted at the inordinate amount of wear and tear to which it has been exposed. This constitutes its history, as what we call a working alphabet; and, in tracing it, the single event of the Norman Conquest is all in all. It plays much the same part in the history of English spelling as the well-abused letter *c* does in the construction of the alphabet. I am not so much in love with two great landmarks, and the simplicity with which they invest our examination, as to distribute the whole mass of the orthographical mischief entailed upon the present generation under these two heads exclusively. There are certain faults common to all systems of spelling, and such when they occur in English, cannot, of course, be imputed to either of these causes. But so long as our spelling has nothing worse than these, it is no worse than that of other countries. It is by the inordinate amount of faultiness peculiar to itself, that it especially afflicts our language; and of this, I think that nine-tenths, at least, are due to these two causes. We must understand this. There are other countries in which they use *c* instead of *k*; but there are none in which the antagonism of the two letters exists as it exists in England; and the antagonism, be it remembered, is that of two systems, the Latin, and the German. There are other countries too, which have been conquered by an army of foreigners, and have, therefore, had their languages inundated by words of foreign origin; but such a history as that of the British Islands during the two centuries which followed the battle of Hasting, we find nowhere except in England.

There is not much to be said about the influence of the Danes. In the charters of Canute and Edward the Confessor, the use of the *k* becomes conspicuous. For this there are two reasons. (1) the original Frank influence dating from the beginning of the seventh century, or the introduction of the Christianity of the Frank missionaries as opposed to that of the Irish, or British church; and (2)

that of Northern Germany upon Denmark, and through Denmark upon Scandinavia in general. Between these two we explain the difference between the orthography of the charters immediately preceding the death of Edward the Confessor and those of Alfred, Athelstan, and Edgar. We are not always sure of the date of the Anglo-Saxon Charters. We may learn, however, by mere inspection, that the derivations from the original spelling are numerous in proportion as they approach the time of the Norman Conquest. We must be careful, however, not to overvalue the Danish influence. There is adequate evidence of this in the Codex Ævi Saxonici. But it must be read with the caution that, though Kemble, as a general rule, marks the chartas of doubtful antiquity with an asterisk, he, so far as he is other than wholly unexceptionable, favors antiquity.

Then comes the Norman Conquest—our great epoch—and, after that, comes a break. For nearly two centuries there is but little written in either English or French. Latin prevails. The exceptions are well known. There is the continuation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. This comes down to the death of Stephen. This is certainly Anglo-Saxon, as opposed to English in its orthography. But it must be remembered that it is the continuation of an Anglo-Saxon work; wherein the spelling of the earlier parts may have served as a model for that of the later ones. Under Henry I., however, the English was depressed; while the French was rather in a state of formation than formed. The court, however, the nobles, the priests, and the lawyers were French. We must see how, in the reign of Henry II., the English emerges after its period of disgrace and abeyance. It still passes, however, for Anglo-Saxon rather than English; and, though it is doubtful whether the language of the few compositions we have of the twelfth century be that of the common people, it is certain that their spelling is that of the bookmen, who looked backwards, rather than that of the speakers, whose natural tendencies were to take the language as they heard it.

But we may now consider the history of the Anglo-Saxon alphabet from a different point of view. We may ask what it would have been if left to itself. I believe this view to be one that has either not hitherto been taken; or, if taken, not considered historically. The conversion of the Anglo-Saxon orthography into an orthography so unlike its former self as the present English, is not the only continuation of its history. It was what we call a mother alphabet; one out of which others were formed; or, to say the least, one by which others were largely influenced. For the first of these we must look to Westphalia. This is because, in Westphalia, we are in the old Saxon country; in what is called Lower *Saxony*. The Franks *before* the time of Charlemagne were Christians. The Saxons, *after* his time, were Pagans. England, meanwhile, had been Christianised. It was the business of these Christianised Englishmen to send missionaries into the old country—Westphalia, Friesland, and Northern Germany in general. And here their ef-

forts were successful. In England the Northern Germans were called the *Old Saxons*; *Eald-Seaxan*, *Antiqui-Saxones*; their instructors being the *Anglo-Saxons*. These last took with them their own proper alphabet; and out of this grew a comparatively creditable body of compositions. Some of them hardly deserve the name of literature; for they are mere muniments, or rolls of certain convents, *i.e.*, of Essen and Frekkenhorst. But the *Heliand*, *Healer*, or *Savior*, a metrical harmony of the four Gospels, giving us the history of Christ during his ministry on earth, is a work of no small importance. Being written without any metrical division of the lines, it was, at first, mistaken for a narration in prose, and for one composed in the Danish parts of England; by which supposition its divergence from the ordinary Anglo-Saxon was accounted for. It is now known to be a poem. As for its language it is amply explained by the doctrine that it was the *Old Saxon* of the original mother country in Germany. Add to this the fact that it is that of the rolls and muniments of the Westphalian convents already mentioned, and the evidence is complete.

Here, then, we have the Anglo-Saxon alphabet in Germany, where it may re-act on that of the Franks, just as that of the Franks acted upon the English. It is essentially Anglo-Saxon with differences. The Anglo-Saxon *w* is *uu*. The *c* is strictly adopted. The only word I remember as spelt with *k* is the proper name *Isaak*. The same claim, of having supplied either an alphabet as an actual model, or a standard to which writers might refer, may be made upon Scandinavia. In the present Icelandic, Swedish, and Danish we know that the *k* is paramount. *C* appears oftenest in the Swedish; but it is only when it precedes a *k*, for the sake of indicating the shortness of the vowel which it follows, as *dricka*, in Danish *drikke*. Here the function of *c* is just what it is in *thick*. But in the older Icelandic manuscripts, though *c* is non-existent in the print, *k* is exceptional; or rather it is found subject to the rule we can so easily anticipate; the one connected with the broadness or smallness of the vowel by which it is followed. Thus while the print of the *Völuspá* runs:—

Hljóðs bið *ec* allar
 Helgar *k*inder,
 Meiri *ok* minni,
 Mögum Heimdallar,
 Vildu at *ek* Valföðrs
 Vél framtelja,
 Fornspjöll fira,
 þau er *ek* fremst um man

The manuscript on which it is founded runs:—

Hljóðs bið *ec* allar *k*inder meiri miNi mangu heimdalar vildo at *ec* ualfað uel
 fýr telia forn spjoli fira þæ e' fremst ū man.

But, even here, when *two* vowels follow, the spelling is with *c* as—

Sol stein sunnan
 A' salar steina,
 þá var grund gróin
 Grœnum lauki.

in the manuscript—

Sol scein suNa a salar steina þa var grvnd groin grœnō lauki.⁽⁶⁾

The earlier Anglo-Saxon prototype and the latter modifications of it are here manifest. In the Codex Regius, assigned to the beginning of the fourteenth century, *k* appears before *n* as *kna*. Upon this, however, Munch remarks that "*c* is used oftener than *k*." In the Arne Magnusson Codex the *k* is exclusively used.

From the Icelandic, or Old Norse, the present alphabets of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are derived. They are of average merit; and such we may suppose the English would have been had there been nothing to interfere with it.

SECTION XLII.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF ENGLISH SPELLING SUBSEQUENT TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST.—THE MUTE *E*.

Though the mute *e* is mainly of French origin we must not suppose that it is wholly and absolutely foreign to our language. It appears, for the first time, after the Norman Conquest; and, at present, it is in words introduced from France that it chiefly occurs. So far, then, as it is conspicuous and prominent it is French; but it is probable that, even if no such an event as the Battle of Hastings had occurred, we might have mute *e*'s to some extent at least, of native origin and independent growth. In all words where the penultimate vowel is long, and the last is the letter *e*, (which in this case is sounded,) there is always a chance of the *e* becoming, sooner or later, obsolete; in which case it drops out of the pronunciation. If then, as generally happens, the spelling fail to keep pace with the pronunciation, and if the vowel be preserved in writing after it has been dropped in speaking, a mute *e* is the natural result; and as the syllable which precedes it is already long, the connection between the two vowels in the way of orthography, is invested with a character to which it has no claim. The two vowels look as if they belonged to a system, or a method, or had some connection with a principle, or a function, namely, that of indicating longness. The combination, however, has, as we have seen, a different origin; and is in fact, so far as the expression of quantity is concerned, merely accidental.

Now the extent to which a final *e* became thus obsolete in the earlier stages of our language was inordinately great; greater, perhaps, than in French, as may be seen by the merest inspection of an

Anglo-Saxon grammar. In our language anterior to the Norman Conquest, there was a whole declension of substantives, in which the nominative case ended in *-n*, and the oblique cases in *-e*;—an *e* which was as clearly sounded as it is in the present German, or Danish. This was the case with *heortan, tungan, eage, hearts, tongues, eyes*, etc. Here the first step in the change was the ejection of the sound of the final consonant; then came that of *e*; which was long preserved in writing.

Besides this, there was a double inflection of the adjective. When it followed the definite article, *-n* or *-e* was the ending. Hence, there came a Definite, as opposed to an Indefinite, Declension; and this, also, at the present moment occurs in German. So important is this real and organic *-e* with its subsequent disappearance in speech, that it gives us one of the rules for the pronunciation of the adjective in Chaucer; where (whatever may be the case in other words) we are safe in treating it, for the purposes of metre, as sounded where it is Definite, or preceded by *the*. In this, then, to go no farther, we get a measure of the degree to which the Anglo-Saxon orthography had, within itself, the germ of what we may call the mute *e* system; for it is the doctrine of the present writer that the final vowel was written, at least, as long as it was pronounced, and the hypothesis (we may almost say the certain fact) that it was retained in the writing after it had been dropped in the pronunciation are equally legitimate deductions from the history of our orthography. Hence, when, from two different causes—the one derived from our own language, and the other from the French, the two modes of spelling became confluent or united, the predominance of what looks like a very artificial way of expressing the length of a vowel, is explained by the very natural process of a change in language preceding the appropriate change in spelling; or the retention of a letter in writing after its proper function had become, both literally and figuratively, a *dead* letter. Then, when *e* final was made mute, the necessity of expressing it when sounded, led to orthographical expedients; and this, (as was shown in our remarks on the words *quantity, quality*, etc., which are spelt in French with an accented *é*, whereas with us, the accent was not recognised,) to say the least, favored the practice of writing *y* at the end of words; a thoroughly non-natural termination.

As for the mute *e* itself with a consonant between it and the vowel with which it was supposed to be associated, the orthographic process in which it plays its part is so exceptional, that the English and the French are the only two languages in which it is found. Its origin (as has been shown) was, to some extent, natural. It soon, however, became artificial; consciously, and designedly artificial. One of the worst instances of this is the word *whose*. The Anglo-Saxon was *hwæs*. Here, the *e* presented itself in the diphthong. Then came *hwaes*; then the transposition; in which there is nothing natural; nothing even French. It is purely and simply artificial;

and when considered with reference to its natural import, a combination of which the true signification is as different as can be from its conventional; in other words, it is an artifice of the worst kind. *Pence* is much such another word as *whose*, i.e., an example of the mute *e* in its most objectionable state.

SECTION XLIII.

HISTORICAL SKETCH, ETC. (*continued*). THE APOSTROPHE (') AS
A SIGN OF THE GENITIVE CASE.

The *e* mute, which presented itself at the *end* of words was dropped; or fell off. The *e* which preceded the *s* in words like *scipes* = *ships*, and served as part of the sign of the genitive case, was *elided*; i.e., it lay in the middle of two other letters and slipped out from between them. Hence, it became obsolete as a *sound*: and so long as it was used in spelling was, as a *letter*, mute. In the plural number where there was the same termination in *-s*, the original vowel which preceded it was *a*; as *wulfas* = *wolves*. Both vowels, however, suffered elision: the result being the use of the so-called apostrophe; as in *the man's hat*, *the children's father*, *the ships' sails*,—three different forms, each of which is a bad one, and each bad in a manner peculiar to itself. They deserve, however, notice; because of all the orthographical expedients with which the English language is overloaded, this use of the apostrophe has the least foundation in anything like a philological fact; while it presents on the other hand, the most decided signs of a conscious adaptation, invention, or construction. It is not, however, a mere sign of elision in general; for, if it were so, we should find it in the nominative and accusative plural as well as in the genitive singular. But in the plural it is conspicuous from its absence; and is meant to be so: for it is a sign not only of elision but of differentiation or distinction between two elided sounds. It is not, then, so much the sign of a vowel in the genitive case which has dropped out, as that of a difference in case and number between the word *lions* in such clauses as the following (1) *the lion's den* and (2) *the lions are let loose*. Now in respect to this expedient we may fairly say that, supposing an expedient of any kind to be needed, it is, as we here see it before us, one of more than average merit. All expedients, in the eyes of the Phonetic speller, are bad. But this is among the least bad. As a construction it is simple and natural; and as a sign adequate to the work it has to do; so that the only objection to it is its superfluity.

Here, however, we must stop. Its extension to the genitive plural is utterly indefensible. Except in the few words like *men*, *women*, *children*, *oxen*, where we actually say *the men's memories*, *the women's children*, *the children's parents*, *the oxen's horns*, the *s* has no real

existence: and as there is no genitive in 's there is no elision; and that for the simple reason that there is nothing to be elided. Hence the *s* represents nothing. No one supposes that there were ever such words as *ships-es*, *fox-es-es* and the like; or that such a sentence as "the genitive plural is formed from the nominative by the addition of *-es*" ever existed as a real rule. The Anglo-Saxon genitive plural ended in *-a*, and when this became narrowed into *-e*, and the *-e* became mute, there was no sign of any case in the plural number except the nominative. This, however, is by no means, an intolerable condition for a language to be reduced to. The French has no sign for a genitive case in either number; and, by means of the preposition *de*, does very fairly without one. By a similar application of *of* we might have done the same: indeed, it is the opinion of the present writer, that in nine cases out of ten this is what we do. Still we have such constructions as the *children's bread* and the *ships' sails*; and the explanation of them is easy. Taken by itself, the notion that the genitive plural may stand to the nominative of that number in the same relation that genitive and nominative cases singular stand to each other, is one which when a language is (so to say) in difficulties and reduced to an alternative, naturally presents itself. The actual formation, however, of the new cases is, by no means, so simple. Thus—the English nominative plural has already a sign; *stone*, *stones*, just like the Latin *lapis*, *lapides*; and before we can substitute another for it (for the process is one of substitution rather than of addition) this sign has to be got rid of; for, it is clear, that we can no more say *stones-es*, than the Latin can say *lapides-um*; though something like it is done with the word *its*; where *t* is the sign of the neuter gender, and *s*, the sign of the genitive case, is tacked on to it. Let this difficulty, however, be got over, a second remains. The signs of the cases, the nominative plural and the genitive singular, are alike; both ending in *s*. Yet we do not say *ships'es*, and still less *fox-es-es*. What then does this 's represent? The best that can be said of it is that it represents a confluence, fusion, amalgamation, or unification of two *ss'es*, with different powers, and belonging to different numbers, and though this, being a purely historical fact, is not capable of being represented in speech, it is the high prerogative of orthography, in cases like these, to make good the want of a real distinction by an artificial one; and that, in the case before us, the apostrophe of the genitive singular with its change of position in respect to the *s*, does this. With the few words in *n* (*men's*, *oxen's*) the addition is real; and, so far as there is a genitive plural at all, these are the words in which it occurs. Here, however, no (') is wanted. There has been no elision; and there is nothing with which the forms can be confounded: the singular genitives being *man's*, *woman's*, *child's*, *ox's*.

The apostrophe, then, in the genitive plural is much less defensible than that of the genitive singular. Neither is laudable; though the latter is less blameworthy than the former. It is the misfor-

tune, however, of this unlucky sign to have been woefully misinterpreted. We all know what it was for a long time supposed to represent; viz.: the pronoun *his*. We know, too, the chief texts, ("Christ *his* sake" and others,) upon which this belief rested. The rectification of this error took place by degrees. The objection that lay closest at hand was, of course, the fact that it was only for the masculine gender of the singular number that this explanation was available. We do not, it was urged, say "The Queen, *her* Majesty" nor yet "the children, *their* bread." This, however, was soon condemned as insufficient: inasmuch as, though nothing like so common as *his*, both *their* and *her* are used in the corresponding constructions. A better objection, however, was found in the word *hi-s* itself; because, here, the *s* could not possibly be made (so to say) out of itself. The most conclusive argument, however, was, at the same time, the shortest, and this was the fact of the *s* in "father's" being simply the *s* in the Latin "patris," the Greek *πατρός*, the *s*, indeed, of all the Indo-European languages.

This is as much as need be said about the two most prominent conventionalities which followed the Norman Conquest. The rest may be considered more briefly: indeed they need only be indicated.

(a) The doubling of the vowel, as in *feet*, to show that its sound is long, is one which is so natural that we only wonder at its not having become practical and prominent at an earlier period; i.e., in the Latin stage of the alphabet. It is foreshadowed by the Greek Omega Ω, ω, which is, really, a modified, lengthened, and enlarged Omicron, Ο, ο. The whole doctrine of the Greek Isochronism, or Equality of Time, pointed in the same direction. The statement that two short *syllables*, equalled one long one, and *vice versa*, had only to be extended to the vowel, and the doubling of the vowel as a sign of longness followed. The Anglo-Saxon, though imperfect and inconsistent, promoted this result.

(b) The combination of *different* vowels in the same syllable is due to other, and less simple causes. The Anglo-Saxon combinations *ea* and *eo* (though here the smaller vowel preceded the broader one, and was often semi-vocalic) had the effect, to say the least, of accustoming the eye to the presence of two vowels in the same syllable: and be it remarked that, in English, the sequence is that of the Anglo-Saxon stage; i.e., *e* comes before *a*. *I*, however, is rarely found in the same place: and this is because it was, when followed by a vowel, diphthongal; or, in the eyes of those who failed to recognise its diphthongal character, long; and, as such, less likely to suggest coalescence. In Dutch the *e* follows the broader vowel; and here is, so far as mute letters are tolerable, the mute *e* in its right place; or would be if it had a place at all.

(c) Combinations like *oa* as in *coal* are probably due to another cause, and have no connection with the expression of longness. They seem to be the result of the original indistinctness (already noticed) between the sounds of *a* and *o*.

(d) The same applies to *oo* = *ū*, an indistinctness which has also already been indicated.

(e) *I* after *a*, (as in *snail*), in words of English origin, almost always indicates an original *g* (*snægel*), which is first changed into *y*, and then, being eliminated, brings the two vowels in juxta-position.

There is enough in these examples to show that in the actual contact of two vowels in the same syllable, much as it may offend against one of the primary laws of Phoneticism, there is little non-natural or arbitrary. But is this all? No. We have written as if these anomalous forms of spelling were only detrimental so far as they were anomalies. But this is not the fact. They are inconsistent as well; for the *oo* in *foot* is short: and that either the second vowel as the sign of longness, or the second consonant (as in *spotted*) as a sign of shortness is superfluous, has already been stated. Hence we have, in addition to an inordinate amount of anomalies, a notable amount of inconsistencies and redundancies as well.

SECTION XLIV.

DIALECTS OF THE ANGLO-SAXON AND OLD ENGLISH.

These redundancies and inconsistencies might have been prevented by a certain amount of rigidity or uniformity in the practice of our spelling. But no such conditions existed. It is still a matter of uncertainty as to the particular dialect which the orthoepy and orthography of the present literary English represent. It was *not* that of the literary Anglo-Saxon; not that of the dialect which prevailed anterior to the Norman Conquest. Nor is it unnatural that such should be the case. The present High German is not that of the parts which most especially constituted the Germania of Tacitus. The Castilian of Spain is not that of the great mass of the Spanish peninsula. The Italian is that of Florence rather than of Rome; the French that of Northern France; anything, indeed, but that of the district wherein the first language of Gaul was both spoken and written; indeed, so far as the place of its first successful cultivation is concerned, the French originated in England rather than in France. Just, then, as it would be a mistake to suppose that the present Italian was a continuation of some Sicilian or South Italian form of speech; the Castilian one of the Catalonian or Valencian; the German one of that of Westphalia or the parts about Cologne, and the French that of Provence; so it would be an error to suppose that, between the language of Alfred and the language of Dryden, there was any literary continuity. In short, in England, as elsewhere, the points which coincided with the cultivation of the earlier and the later English literatures shifted.

Now the cultivated dialect of the Anglo-Saxon period was the West Saxon, or the Saxon of Wessex; the English of the counties

of Dorset, Wilts, Berks, and Hants. The nearest approach to a concurrent literary language was in Northumberland. We may call this form of speech, if we choose, Angle rather than Saxon, though the term is anything but unexceptionable. Both, however, were, *English*. Then there was the great intervening tract formed by the Midland and Eastern counties, which we may call Mercia and East Anglia. Of the Mercian, however, and the East Anglian dialects the cultivation was, practically, *nil*. The little we know about them tells us that they differed from one another less than the West Saxon and Northumbrian, and that they differed in small and negative, rather than in great and positive, characters.

Now as an origin of the present literary English, the claim on the part of Northumberland is no better than that of Wessex. Nor is there one for East Anglia as opposed to Mercia. Individually I hold, with the generality of investigators, that the *Mercian* is the dialect which the present written language most especially represents: and to Mercia I assign London. I prefer this to fixing upon any particular county as the district from which we are specially called to deduce it. Mercia gives us the counties wherein we find the smallest amount of provincialism, and, also, those to which the two Universities belong.

Be this as it may, the history of our literature gives the West Saxon dialects a predominance until the middle of the fourteenth century. Over and above the writers of the proper Anglo-Saxon period we have for Wessex, Layamon, and the author of the Ancrens Riwe, Nicholas of Guildford, the author of the Ayenbite of Inwit (a native of Kent, but a writer whose language is nearly as Devonian as that of Devonshire itself,) Robert of Gloucester, William of Shoreham, Langland, the author of Piers Plowman's Vision, Trevisa, (both these somewhat later than their predecessors) and others, either anonymous or of less importance. Against these there is little to be set, except the conclusion of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which is assigned to the parts about Peterboro'; the Ormulum, and Havelok the Dane, which are assigned to the Danish parts of England; Robert Manning, or Robert of Bourne, a Lincolnshire man; and Rolle, or the Hermit of Hampole, the author of The Prick of Conscience, a Yorkshire man.

Chaucer and Gower and Mandeville, in the latter part of Edward III.'s reign were Londoners. Wycliffe's language was probably that of the university of Oxford, rather than of his birthplace, Yorkshire. By the beginning of the fifteenth century there is a fair proportion of writers from the more central districts—London being included herein. Great changes now take place. The most Northern dialects of Northumberland, which, philologically, extended to the Forth, are now the dialects of a literature of no ordinary merit; for just while the English is in a degenerate and chaotic state, the Scotch is advancing. But we must not call it Scotch, not even Lowland Scotch. We must call it what the speakers themselves called

it, English. They were constrained, perhaps unwillingly, to do this ; but they had no choice in the matter. It had to be distinguished from the Gaelic of the Highlands ; even at the cost of some national distaste to the name. The English, however, of Northern England is not the English of our classical writers.

In other respects, too, the first three quarters of the fifteenth century form a notable epoch. The antagonism between the English and the Norman French has ended in the predominance of the former. The age, too, is an age of manuscripts. Printing is about to begin ; but just in proportion as the vocation of the copyist approaches its end, the mass of materials has accumulated ; for the manuscript stage of our literature and orthography is now in its ninth century ; and there is more than ever there was before to be transcribed. Neither are authorship and transcription limited to any particular districts. We have now manuscripts from the borders of Wales. We have now, in Capgrave and Lydgate, writers from East Anglia ; and both these, Shropshire and Norfolk, are quarters to which, hitherto, but little has been assigned. There is, indeed, a diffusion of the practice of both composing and copying to an extent hitherto unknown : of uniformity, or any directing authority, very little. It was no part of the business, then, of the transcriber of a work in a dialect different from his own to adhere to the very words and letters of his author. *Translation* from one local form to another is too strong a word. But, though the transcriber did not translate, he *accommodated* the minor details of spelling and grammar from one part of England to that of another—the one to which he himself belonged. That this was done largely we know from ample evidence. How much confusion it created we can more easily imagine than calculate.

SECTION XLV.

EXTENSION OF THE PHONETIC PRINCIPLE AND SUBJECTS ALLIED TO PHONETIC SPELLING, AS SPECIALLY APPLIED TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

The Phonetic Spelling, so far as it has hitherto been discussed, is that of the English language. The term, however, has a wide import ; and, there are certain varieties in the application of the phonetic principle which are sufficiently akin to the subject of the present treatise to call for a slight notice.

The first of these is Metagraphy,⁽⁶⁾ or Transliteration. This

6. This is a derivative from *μετα*, in its sense suggestive of action and reaction, or interchangeableness, and *γράφω* = *I write*. I can safely recommend the word, inasmuch it is not one of my own construction ; but one suggested nearly forty years ago by one of the best scholars in Cambridge. It is not held that, except so far it is somewhat shorter, Metagraphy is a better word than Transliteration : and it is admitted that Transliterate is a much better word than Metagraphize. On the other hand, however, Metagraphic is a better word than Transliterational. There is room for, and need of, both.

means the substitution, sign for sign, of some letter in an alphabet comparatively known (say the English, or any one of Western Europe) for one in an alphabet comparatively strange; as for instance the Sanskrit, or the Hebrew; indeed, any Oriental alphabet whatever. If the latter be, itself, phonetic, the two principles coincide. This, however, is merely a happy accident. If the English alphabet were transliterated into the Greek it would be no more phonetic than it is at present. The Greek reader would get a series of letters somewhat less unfamiliar to him than the English are at present. The faulty spelling, however, would still remain. As between a Greek and an Englishman this would be but a small boon. Where the orthography, however, is of a moderate badness, and where the difference of the letters is considerable, the boon is a great one: and, in all cases, there is some advantage.

We have now only to ask whether a letter which will stand for a sound in one language, can stand for the same sound in another; and, if the answer be given in the affirmative, the question of a Universal Alphabet dawns upon us. What the answer is, and what it may lead to, is another question. The three questions have been suggested for the sake of showing how they are connected, and how they differ; and further than this we are not called to go.

Out of a mixture of Metagraphy and Phonetic Spelling we get the most difficult of the problems connected with our subject; namely, the transliteration of dead languages so far as their pronunciation is known, combined with the attempt to represent the true sounds of the letters and combinations of which the import is doubtful. In the Latin, where the letters are the same as our own, this is merely phonetic spelling. In the Greek it is phonetic spelling with metagraphy superadded. Important as these questions are, they need not, in a treatise like the present, detain us beyond the mere indication of their place in a full view of the general system of Orthographical Reform.

For a different reason I say nothing about the extension of Long-hand Phonography to Shorthand. I know so little of it that I am constrained to take its merits upon trust. Nor is this the place to publish the unanimous verdict that I have heard in favor of the extension. It is part, however, of the system, and those who know it best put the highest value upon it.

Lastly comes the notice of what, when it was done for the first time, was the greatest benefit ever conferred on mankind; namely, that analysis of sentences into words, and of words into their articulate elements, without which the sign that speaks to the eye is impossible. Here there is nothing but Progress to report. Not a year goes by without our hearing of some language, barbarous as it may be, being reduced to writing, generally by the missionary, but sometimes, from the mere love of his subject, by the philologue. To bring the results of all this into harmony, is the duty and pleasure of the systematic student. The English and the Russian languages

show the greatest amount of admirable work in this field ; the English and American missionaries from every quarter of the world, the Russian *savans* from the Babels of Caucasus and Siberia. I am unwilling to travel beyond the wide domain of the Anglo-Saxon tongue ; but, with accumulations of new material, in all cases requiring a phonetic representation, it is impossible to abstain from the expression of a hope that it is not too late to put the whole system of Phonësis on as broad a basis as possible. For the leading languages of the world a universal alphabet is but the dream of an enthusiast. For the languages recently reclaimed from barbarism, and, still more, for those where the reduction of an alphabet is either in progress or prospect, some approach to harmony and unity may be effected.

SECTION XLVI.

REVIEW OF THE QUESTION.

Such is the exposition of that part of the subject which the writer has thought himself best justified in laying before the reader ; and it is plain that it forms but one division of the question. Upon the general character of the defects of the most insufficient system of writing in the world, there are works both old and new ; not, indeed, in excess of the demands of the subject, nor yet proportionate to them ; but still numerous enough to form a small literature ;—one, however, of which it is certain that the dimensions must increase. Few who have written on the matter will feel themselves disparaged by a special reference to the work which, in conjunction with the earliest Journal printed in phonetic types, first succeeded in fixing public attention on the reform of which the writer was the advocate,—Mr Ellis's "Plea for Phonetic Spelling." This was, mainly, a classification of the actual, and an anticipation of many possible, objections to it. Between these and its successors (for the greater part, contributions to our periodical literature) little is now left to be done, either in the exposure of the thousand-and-one faults of the present system, or the exposition of the advantages of a phonetic one. It is probable, that, as so many matters of simple fact, they are admitted by even the foremost defenders of things as they are. If so, the time for the enumeration of them is going by. At any rate, I have considered myself justified in taking them for granted. Neither have I cared to go out of my way to denounce them : for it is possible that, flagrant as the demerits of our spelling may be, they have been stripped and whipped according to their deserts. I have, then, taken them, as aforesaid, for granted. Considered as obstacles in the way to knowledge no one thinks worse of them than I do ; yet I am sensible that, at the first view, the present treatise, may be mistaken for a palliation, perhaps, for a defence, of them. It tries to account for them ; and to account for them is to show

that they are neither less nor greater than we should expect to find them; or, in other words, that, given the conditions under which they arose, they are only what they ought to be. This, however, in the most decided way that an admission can be made, admits their existence, so that if further proof of it were required, it would be found in the criticism that explains it. And this method carries us farther than it seems to do. The great theoretical objection is the Etymological; and this, the *historical* view of the origin of the present system, most especially enables us to meet; for what is the etymology of a word but its history? what its history but its etymology?

Important, however, as this branch of the question may be, it is not the one which touches us the nearest. The mere theoretical objections to a change are a trifle. The "lion in the way" is the existing system, and those who should assail it are those whom it most affects—the million, the masses, or whatever else they may be called; the thousands of the present, the tens of thousands of the rising generation, those to whom time and money are of importance, and that to such an extent that even a boon like primary education may be purchased too dearly. It is these who are, or ought to be, most in earnest in favor of a change; and there is far more danger in their apathy than in the opposition of the learned. There are several facts by which Phoneticism may be recommended; just as there were several upon which objections could be founded. But, just as there was one objection, the etymological, which outweighed all the rest as a point for theoretical discussion, so is there, also, one recommendation which—for the class now addressed—is all-in-all; and that is, its value in primary education, or, to put it in humbler language, the teaching of reading. Symmetry and consistency, and the rational representation of articulate sounds, and other matters of the same kind, may gratify the scholar and the etymologist. Etymologists, however, or comparative philologists, as they best like to be called, unless they have either to teach the alphabet to their own children, or have grown-up sons who may be plucked for dictation, care much more for Metagraphy than for Phonetic Spelling *per se*. Anything like enthusiasm must be got from them in their character as educationists; and the two attachments by no means, of necessity, go together. The enthusiasm of Mr Ellis and the still unabated perseverance of Mr Pitman, are not likely to be again combined.

Not but what everyone of these subordinate applications, and these amateur tastes, has its value in the promotion of the greater end. They are the smaller springs, the ornamental rivulets, which help to swell the impetus of a grand stream which must owe both its main waters and its definite direction to a more unfailing source, and to a stronger power. It is the business and the interest of others to make it both broad and deep, and to direct it towards the machinery for which it is most specially demanded. The

Glossic system of Mr Ellis is, in this respect, a good help, though a bad substitute. Of the Shorthand Phonography of Mr Pitman I know less; but I can easily see that, when Mr Ellis tells us that those who have learned shorthand phonetically, will not learn long-hand on the present system of spelling, he simply tells us the truth. Metagraphy, and the aspirations for a universal alphabet help us in the same direction; but the paramount power is the one which, founded as it is in the value of Phoneticism for the purposes of primary education, must be derived from the union and the sagacity of the vast masses which it interests.

SECTION XLVII.

THE WORKING ALPHABET.

It has been no part of the present writer's aim to exhaust the subject; still less has it been either within his aim, or his authority, to write in the character of a director or an adviser. What he has done is to exhibit the faults of the present system from a point of view which is, to some extent, a new one. He has assumed that they exist; and that, to an extent which those who have most earnestly impeached the current orthography have not over-rated. He has assumed their existence, and, to a certain extent, excused it. But the excuse has been a condemnation. How these inordinate faults, both of omission and commission are to be rectified, is a matter for the consideration of those whom it affects most. These are not the learned Few who have got over difficulties which they have forgotten, but the unlearned Many who have yet to learn: and to say this is to say that it is, solely and wholly, as a matter of Primary Education—in other words the arts of reading and writing—that the question has been treated. The treatise itself is, probably, that of an etymologist. The object, however, is that of the educationist—that of one who looks to the value of the phonetic system in *primary* education only.

The working-out of the special details of such a change as those involved in Phonetic Reform is as different from the theoretical part of it as Administration is different from Legislature; the aptitudes for one, being, by no means, synonymous with the aptitudes for the other. Hence, I have never presumed to give advice—advice, at least, of a positive kind. “Do this” or “do that” are forms of the imperative mood which have not found a place in the treatise; nor will they. At the same time there are certain things which may be recommended *not* to be done. The first, and foremost of these is—

(a) *Don't do nothing.*—It is implied in what has preceded that, bad as is our present orthography, it is no worse than the present generation has a right to expect. If, however, with its full knowledge of all these deficiencies, the present generation bequeath it to the next; if those who are most concerned in amending it, either

leave the work to be done by others, or to do itself, no such extenuation can be pleaded. If we not only take it as we find it, but are satisfied to keep it as we take it, it is pretty clear that, bad as it is, it is as good a one as we deserve.

(b) *Don't keep out of the water till you have learnt to swim*: this meaning, *Don't wait until you have got a Phonetic Alphabet which pleases everybody*. An Alphabet is, of all things in the world, the most equivocal. It partly belongs to Science; partly to Art. It is, to a large extent, dependent upon the powers of analysis and comparison, on the part of the constructor; to an extent equally large on his taste for the harmonious and the symmetrical. How often, or rather how rarely, these two qualities in the highest degree are combined in one and the same individual, the history of human thought tells us very plainly. Of the two great divisions, however, the latter presents the more important difficulties. The decomposition of the several words into their articulation elements is a point upon which, in all the cultivated languages of Europe, the work is already done. What remains is the choice, or the invention, of the particular signs by which these are expressed. Now, in its most general terms, an Alphabet of this kind is one of which a cynical sciolist might say that it is an achievement which anyone above six years of age can accomplish. "He could," he might say, "dash down three dozen different combinations of straight lines, curves, and dots, and the thing would be done." He might, perhaps, if he meant to be very contemptuous, say that "the aid of color could be invoked, and that, with only twelve original signs, he might draw them in red, blue, or brown, by making one color denote one dozen of articulations, and another another, and do the whole thing out of twelve combinations. He might, too, by bringing in all the colors of the rainbow, reduce the number of really invented (or applied) signs to a *minimum*, and so bring printing to the condition of painting."

We know that this is neither more nor less than puerile trifling, but there is excuse for introducing it; inasmuch as it shows how easy the construction of an alphabet is from *one* point of view. Alphabets, under such a freedom from limitations, may, possibly, be constructed at the rate of a letter per minute.

Let us, however, take the opposite view. Then, the difficulty becomes as conspicuous as the ease has hitherto been. Paradoxical as it may sound at first, the statement that, so far as the question of new signs (letters) is concerned, construction is easier than improvement, is both true and important: important because, without seeing its full bearing on the present question, we cannot duly appreciate the difficulties with which the modern reformer must contend. With (say) between thirty and forty letters, all coined out of his own brain, he can ensure a due amount of symmetry or harmony among them; so that he has, consequently, nothing to fear from the perception of incongruity on the part of the reader. With a frame-

work, however, of (say) twenty characters as parts of a well-known alphabet already in use, he has the unsatisfactory task of adapting the new to the old; to avoid what Mr Ellis has called the Strange-appearance objection; an objection which of all the ones that have ever been made against Phonetic Spelling is the hardest to refute. Where a character is too complex or too cumbrous for writing; where it is too indistinct in its outline to be a good indicator of difference; where, from being either so unlike the letter to which it is allied in sound, or so like others with which it has no such affinity, as to suggest an incorrect view of the Phonēsis of the language to which it applies, (not to mention other shortcomings of less importance,) there is something definite and tangible upon which an objection may be made, or a defence founded. But the Strange-appearance objection is mainly a matter of taste; and when, of two disputants, one says that such or such a combination of lines displeases, and the other that it pleases, his eye, there is little more to be said on the subject. There is something, indeed, that a dispassionate looker-on might suggest; for he might urge that familiarity or unfamiliarity with the combination might have more to do with its congruity or incongruity than the actual details of its outline. This, no doubt, is true; but the proportion which the two elements bear to one another is not a matter that we can either weigh or measure. Neither is the system itself with which a new letter has to be brought into conformity a simple one: inasmuch as it gives us a great deal more than the mere twenty-five or thirty letters of any particular alphabet. The number of these, whatever it may be, has to be multiplied by four—*i.e.*, for capitals and for small letters, for printing and for manuscript. Respect, too, must be had to the alphabets of other languages; though this is not one of the more important complications: for, upon the whole, our motto in England should be, “English principles for English spelling.” Still, where the original orthography is so peculiar as to be exceptional and eccentric when compared with that of other countries, a derivation from the national principle in its strictest form is not only pardonable but imperative. In no part of their work have the constructors of the Phonetic Alphabet shown a sounder judgement than in their treatment of the English vowels. Of *a*, *i*, and *u*, as letters, our pronunciation is pre-eminently exceptional. There is no better proof of this than the abnormal way in which we pronounce what we may call English-Latin, or Latin as it is taught and read in England. General, however, as this eccentric pronunciation may be within the Four Seas, it has been ignored; and the ordinary power given to the exceptional vowels on the Continent has been recognised. There is, in this, not only an anticipation of the charge of imperfect scholarship, but sound sense and legitimate conservatism. When the English is spelt properly, English-Latin will be pronounced, so far as the vowels go, in the only way in which, *out of England*, it is pronounced at all.

Be this, however, as it may, the preceding instance tells us that there are cases where "England for the English" is not an absolute rule. It leads, however, into further complications: for it enlarges the sphere of the system to which every new letter may have to adapt itself. In an alternative, for instance, between two signs, the constructor who holds that, if one letter has a certain currency in certain important languages, while another has not, the latter should go to the wall, there is much to be said on both sides. For what are the languages which are of sufficient importance to demand this abatement of the original rule? Is the practice of the French, the Italian, the Spanish, the Portuguese, and, above all, the Latin on one side, sufficient to outweigh that of the German, the Dutch, the Danish, the Swedish, the Icelandic, and the Greek on the other—supposing that *c* or *k* be the letter in question? We know that on this point doctors have disagreed; and, individually, I have a strong opinion that the decision in favor of *k* is the right one. But the question is a complex one. Now the more comprehensive and more ambitious a reformer's view may be, the greater the amount of the complications that embarrass him. No one doubts as to the advantages of a Universal Alphabet—*optandum magis quam sperandum*. Other things, then, being equal, the spelling that favors it should prevail. For the present purpose, I am neither comprehensive nor ambitious; but, if I were so, I should certainly be perplexed in more cases than one, as to my choice of a sign or letter.

Then there is another complication. It seems to be a matter of almost instinctive unanimity that vowels within the same degrees of longness and shortness (so called) should be represented by signs of some appreciable similarity. No one would propose a letter like the Greek *xi* (Ξ ξ) for a vowel. How far is this principle to extend?—for it is a principle, though no definite reason for its existence or its limitations has been given with any adequate exposition. What are we to do with sounds like the *th* in *thin* and in *thine*? Are they to be *t* and *d* with a difference?—for such is the phonetic relation: or are they to be as unlike as *f* and *p*, *v* and *b*? I can only say, that though it is not upon any *a priori* principle at all that this or that sign will be constructed, the very suggestion of a principle of any kind suggests a corresponding choice of alternatives.

Again—and as I am only writing for the sake of illustration, and that for the third and last time,—what are we to do with our superfluous letters, such as *c*, *x*, and *q*, which even the ordinary grammarians admit to be redundant? Are we to eliminate them altogether, or are we to use them up—utilise them as the word is—as old signs with a new import?

"Utilise them, by all means," says A, "because it will save the excogitation of a new letter."

"Fling them away off-hand, and have done with them," says B, "because the new power will give us the trouble of unlearning the old one."

Who will decide on the comparative value of these two recommendations and the two reasons by which they are accompanied?

Surely, then, if from one point of view the construction of an alphabet is a light matter, it is, from another, a very grave one. But all this may, possibly, be got over; for every one of the preceding questions can be reasoned on. So can certain points connected with the forms of the several letters. A printer may decide that one of a pair is better for the press; a copyist that it is better for the pen; a reader may say whether it is or is not sufficiently distinct. But what are we to say to the Strange-appearance objection? We have already said that next to nothing can be said about it by any third party. The common sense of the body of readers must decide upon it; and the decision cannot be delivered *extempore*.

An alphabet must have had a certain amount of existence, must have lived so long, must have been submitted to so much trial, must have undergone so much wear and tear before a single vote can be given either in confirmation or condemnation of it. The inference from this is self-evident. We must take the best working alphabet as we find it. To wait for one which will, on mere inspection, satisfy all the world is to wait, like the clown at the river, till the water becomes, of its own accord, and for his special accommodation, dry land.

This is, naturally, the introduction to what follows, viz., the prelude to the only working alphabet, that, lying ready for us, precludes us from any excuse for waiting till some other alphabet which shall please everybody is constructed. To wait for this is to fold our hands and live in expectancy *sine die*. It was not extemporised. On the contrary, it is the result of much consideration and practice extending over a quarter of a century. It does not pretend to be a construction which, by mere inspection, satisfies every inspector upon every point. And this the constructors tell us implicitly; for they say with truth that the test is to be found in the attempt to make a better one. It is needless to say that the primary details of the analysis of sounds is complete, and that there is no room whatever for improvement in this matter. Of the rest the reader must judge for himself. It is perfectly impossible for one reader to say how such or such a character may strike the eye of another. He has only to urge three cautions in the criticism of the general character of the alphabet as it is about to be presented to him; or, rather, he has to repeat (and the caution will bear repetition)—(1) the difficulty of improvement; (2) the fact of the alphabet being not only ready-made to his hands, but in actual use; and (3) the simple fact of novelty and unfamiliarity; which has nearly as much to do with what is called the Strangeness of Appearance, as the individual forms of the several new letters themselves.

THE PHONETIC ALPHABET.

The phonetic letters in the first column are pronounced like the italic letters in the words that follow. The last column contains the names of the letters.

CONSONANTS.

Mutes.

P	p	rope.....	pi
B	b	robe.....	bi
T	t	fate	ti
D	d	fade.....	di
Ɔ	ç	cheap ...	çɛ
J	j	edge	je
K	k	leek.....	ke
G	g	league...	gɛ

Continuants.

F	f	safe	ef
V	v	save.....	vi
H	h	wreath ...	if
Ƨ	ð	wreathe..	ði
S	s	hiss	es
Z	z	his	zi
Σ	ʃ	vicious ...	if
Ʒ	ʒ	vision...	ʒi

Nasals.

M	m	seem....	em
N	n	seen.....	en
Ŵ	ŋ	sing	in

Liquids.

L	l	fall	el
R	r	rare	ar

Coalescents.

W	w	wet	wɛ
Y	y	yet	yɛ

Aspirate.

H	h	hay	ɛg
---	---	-----------	----

VOWELS.

Guttural.

A	a	am	at
ʌ	ʌ	alms	s
E	e	ell	et
Ǝ	ɛ	ale	ɛ
I	i	ill	it
Ƭ	i	eel	i

Labial.

O	o	on	ot
Ɔ	ɔ	all	ɔ
Ɔ	ɔ	up	ɔt
Ɔ	σ	ope	σ
U	u	full	ut
U	u	food	u

DIPHTHONGS: Ƨ i,
 as heard in by,

U u, OU ou, OI oi.
 new, now, boy.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

The writer of the following letter, which appeared in the *School Board Chronicle* for 2nd September, 1871, is Mr Edward Jones, master of the Hibernian Schools, Liverpool.

Durin ðe disksjonz whiq presided ðe pasin ov ðe Elementari Edukejon Akt, ðe Rjt On. W. E. Forster, Vjs-Prezident ov ðe Edukejon Department, med ðe folëin stetment az tu whot çildren ov ðe wërkin populejon ot tu bi tot in prjmar skulz befor enterin spon a lif ov lebor:—

It me bi teken for granted ðat wi ot not tu rest until in dis jländ ov ours everi Ingliç çild haz an elementari edukejon. ðæt minz ridin sò ðat hi kan understand whot hi ridz, and ðink about it, rjt sò ðat it kan bi red, and siferin sò ðat ðe figurz kan bi ov ssm us. ðiz ar nesesitiz. ðen ðer ar ðe ksmforts ov edukejon: ssm nolej ov gramar, ssm nolej ov ðe erf on whiq wi liv, and ssm nolej ov ðe histori ov our en kxntri. Gein a litel fërder, tu whot me bi kold biznes, ðe ðiz olse wil bi kold nesesari, ssm nolej ov politikal ekonomi, ssm nolej ov ðe rudimentari prinsipelz ov sjens, ssm nolej ov ðe laggewj nekt most usful tu ourz—ðe Frenc. ðen it wud bi a purr skul in whiq ðer woz not ssm tiçin ov atenjon tu indëstri, diliens, obidiens, order, and poljtnes; and, mer important ðan ðiz, a nolej ov rjt and roj, and ðe motivz tu du rjt and tu avoid roj.

ðis woz Mr Forster's estimet ov ðe standard ov edukejon whiq jud bi emd at in prjmar skulz.

In ðe report ov ðe Edukejon Department for last yir, whiq berz ðe signaturz ov Mr Forster and Lord Ripon, ðe folëin akount ov ðe atenments ov ðe çildren in inspektet skulz iz given:—"If wi aplj tu ðe çildren atendiç our skulz eni test ov ðer atenments at ol pröperfond tu ðer respektiv ejez, wi sal find ðat ðe rezalts ar far belö eni standard ðat kan bi akseptet az satisfaktori." ðe report prösidz tu giv ðe nsmberz ov çildren hu past ðe ekzaminejon in ðe veriss gredez. ðe nsmber hu past ðe Sikst Standard, in whiq ðe pupilz ar rekwjrd tu rid a fort pasej from a nuzpeper and tu rjt ðe sem wið korekt speliç, iz given at 28,000—omitin ðe od nsmberz—whiq iz olmost jidentikal wið ðe nsmber ov masterz, mistreses, and pupil-tigerz emploid. ðæt iz tu se, ðe tigerz nou emploid in inspektet skulz ar ebel tu törn out wën pupil apis per ansm ebel tu rid an ordinari pasej from a nuzpeper wið fer inteliçens, and tu spel

de sem wið akurasi. Wel me Mr Forster and Lord Ripon ekspres ðer dissatisfakþon wið ðiz miger rezólts!

Whj ar ðiz rezólts sê unsatisfaktori? Mæq, doutles, iz œjg tu ðe brøken atendans ov ðe gildren and ðe erli ej at whiq ðe ar wið-dron from skul; bêt ðis wil not akount for ol ðe defisensi.

Ol tigerz ar agrid, however, in tresig tu ðe irregularitiz ov ðe ortografi veri mæq ov ðe bakward stet ov edukeþon in our skulz. Her Majesti'z Inspekterz from tjm tu tjm point tu ðis az a sers ov ðe gretest perpleksiti tu lernerz. In ðe report jæst pæblift, Dr Moréi riiterets ðe oft-repited komplant on ðis sæbjekt; and it wud bi izi tu fil a volum ov prôtests agenst ðe anomaliz ov Ingliþ spelig bi meni ov ðe mæst eminent rjterz in ðe langwey. ðe indjtment ov ðe Prjm Minister iz perhaps ðe mæst emfatik ov ol ðe qarjez whiq hav bin leveld agenst ðe ortografi. Mr Gladstøn, in wæn ov hiz spigez, sed:—

Æ am afred our langwey boðerz a forener dredfuli. Æ ofen fmgk ðat if j wer a forener and had tu set about lernig tu prænouns Ingliþ j sud gæ mad. Æ onestli kan se j kanot konsiv hou it iz ðat a forener lernz hou tu prænouns Ingliþ, when j rekolekt ðe total absens ov rul, meþod, sistem, and ol ðe økziliariz whiq pipel jenerali get when ðe hav tu akwjr sæmþig ðat iz difkslt ov atenment.

Æiz difksltiz, ov kers, mæst bi enkounterd bi ol Ingliþ gildren in lernig tu rid and tu rjt and spel ðer netiv tæg, and ðe ar not les formidabel tu ðem ðan tu ðe “intelijent forener.”

Meni atempts hav bin mad tu prævjd a remedi for ðis jvil, whiq iz universali felt, til ðe pæblik ar olmæst wirid wið ðe kwestion; and yet in œni edukeþonal efort ðis irrepresibel difkslti olwez krops æp, however ænwelkæm and however insolubel ðe problem me apir tu bi. Nou wi apir tu hav kæm tu a ded-lok, edukeþonali spikin, for if wi komper ðe *jdial* ov Mr Forster, kwetæd at ðe komensment ov ðis peper, wið ðe *riæl* stet ov fmgz az sœn in ðe last report ov ðe Department øver whiq Mr Forster sæ ebli prezjdz, wi si ðer iz a gret gælf betwin ðe tû; and ðis wil giv æs an jdia ov ðe magnitjd ov ðe task whiq liz befor æs az tigerz, and memberz ov Skul Bærdz, and ðe frendz ov edukeþon jenerali.

Akordig tu ðe report ov ðe Rejistrar-Jeneral, it apirz ðat about 400,000 gildren pas from ðe skul ej tu ðe wærk ej anqali—ðæt iz, from ðe ej ov færtin tu færtin. Ov ðiz, 30,000 œnli, akordig tu ðe last report ov ðe Edukeþon Department ar tœt tu rid a nuzpeper and tu spel wið akurasi in ðe Gævernment skulz trowut ðe kæntri.

In order, den, tu overtæk dis moderet standard, de efjensi ov de prezent mafineri mæst bi inkrist mærdan tenfæld, tu se næsting ov de "hjer sæbjekts" agrid spon tu bi tæd in primari skulz bi de Lændon Bærd, whig ol wil admit tu bi mæst dezfjabel, ælde mæst edukefjonists wil bi dispezd tu konsider dat ferst ov ol wi æt tu deviz sæm minz bi whig ol our gildren mæ bi tæd tu rid ordinari buks.

Hou iz dis speling difikælti tu bi met? Dr Moræl and Mr Miklejon præpæz, bi konstræktiing skul buks in whig de anomalæs wærdz ar kept out ov sjt til a leter stej ov de gild'z prægres, tu get over de difikælti in sæm mezur. Bæt it iz wel næn dat sæm ov de mæst pæzliing wærdz tu gildren ar de nemz ov tignz "familiar in ðer moudz az houshæld wærdz," az *ni, tsey, i* {*knee, tongue, eye*}, and sæder wærdz in konstant us, sæg az *hi, rijt, næ, tû, et, frend, kof, ræf* {*high, right, know, two, eight, friend, cough, rough*}, ets. And it wud bi difikælt tu fræm sentencez in dat natural, flæing stjl whig gildren deljt in, widout kæmij akros wærdz ljk ðiz.

But de fetal objekfjon tu dis plan iz de tasit konfesjon whig iz impljd in it, dat it iz hæples and usles tu atempt eni revizion ov Ingliif ortografi. De ænli anser tu sæg a doktrin nided iz a kategorikal stetment ov whot meni pipel inwardli tignk—dat iz tu se, dat speling iz a mater tu bi steriotipt for ever in de prezent fæson. Tu dis wæn sæbjekt de læ ov fjaliti iz tu bi apljd; speling iz akordiing tu de læz ov de Midz and Persianz, a tign whig genjet not!

Gud hevenz! De sed ov Kadmæss and de gæst ov Kakston wud bi fokt at sæg a doktrin stærd in de later hæf ov de nintint senturi, and næwæn wud bi mæ særprjzd ðan Dr Samuæl Jonson tu lern, dat hi woz tu bi instæld az a literari Pæp in perpetuiti ænder a nû dogma ov leksikografikal infalibiliti. ðiz iz de mæ særprjziing stil when it iz konsiderd dat Ingland iz about de ænli kæntri in Uroep wher de ortografi haz not bin revjzd bi sæm rekognjzd ætoriti, and dat speling iz about de ænli sæbjekt in Ingland whig haz not bin adapted tu modern rekwjrmænts.

Tæk our sistem ov wets and mezurz. De adopfjon ov a betæ metod iz nou ænli a kwestion ov tign and jæneral konviniens. Iz ðer eni argumænt in fevor ov an impruuvd sistem ov wets and mezurz whig dæz not aplj *a fortiori* tu impruuvments in speling? Ar ðer eni objekfjonz agenst a revizion ov de ortografi whig wud not bi aplikabel in a stronger degri agenst a revizion ov de Skriptur translefsjon, or, *indid, agenst eni impruuvment whotever?*

Æ SPELIW DIFIKŠTLI.

Mis Ejwærð sez:—"Lernig tu rid iz ðe mœst difikšlt ov human atenments; a dredful task tu lern, and, if posibel, a mœr dredful task tu tiq."

Ser Bulwer Liton sez:—"A mœr ljiq, round-about, pæzel-heded deluizgon ðan dāt bi whiq wi konfuz ðe klir instinkt ov truif in our akrsed sistem ov spelig woz never konkokted bi ðe fader ov fœlshud. Hou kan a sistem ov edukefon fœrrið dāt beginz bi sœ monstres a fœlshud, whiq ðe sens ov hirig sšfiez tu kontradikt?"

Rev. D. C. Ginsberg, LL. D.—"I hav had mæq tu du wið spelig and literari wœrk, and, az ekzaminer in several fiolojikol kolejez, i hav got ekzaminefon peperz from hili-eduketed studeñts—sœm ov ðem graduets in ðe universitiz—in whiq ðe spelig sœmtiñz krieted perfekt amuzment. ðe spelig simz an insœrmountabel difikšlti in ðer lif."

Ser C. E. Trevelyan, K.C.B.—"ðe Inglið sistem ov spelig (i protest agenst its biiq kold *ordografi*) iz a labirinð, a keos, an abœrðiti, a disgres tu our ej and ne-
fon. It formz ðe prinsipal difikšlti ov our langwejq—whiq iz ðe mœr prœvœkin, az ðer iz næfiq in ðe strœktur ov Inglið whiq kœlz for it—and kœzez tu anqali-
inkrisiq milionz in ol ðe fœr kworterz ov ðe glœb an enormœs snœsesari ekpen-
ditur ov valqabel tiñ, and stil mœr valqabel temper. ðe amount ov veksefon and disksrejmment and los ov tiñ whiq iz kœzd everi yir, espefali tu forenerz (and tu mœltitudz ov juvenil forenerz tu ðe wœrld ov leterz in our œn land), bi ðe ekstrimli inkorekt we ov spelig nou in qs iz inkalkqlabel."

Maks Mœler.—"I œt not tu œmit hir ["Lekturz on ðe Siens ov Langwejq," de-
liverd at ðe Roial Institutjon, Lœndon, 1863, sekond sœriz, 8vœ., pejq 97], tu menfon ðe valqabel servisez renderd bi ðœz hu, for nœrli twenti yirz, hav bin leboriq in
Ingland tu tœrn ðe rezsits ov sientifik reserq tu praktikal qs, in deviziq and propa-
getiq a nœ sistem ov 'Brif Ritiñ and Truif Speliñ,' best nœn œnder ðe nœm ov ðe
Fœnetik Reform. I am far from œnderretiq ðe difikšltiz dāt stand in ðe we ov
sœq a reform, and i am not sœ sangwin az tu indsij in eni hœps ov sœiq it karid
for ðe nekst tri or fœr jenerefonz. Bœt i fil konvinat ov ðe truif and rizonabel-
nes ov ðe prinsipelz on whiq dāt reform rests, and az ðe innœt regard for truif and
rizon, hœuveer dormant or timid at tiñz, haz œlwez prœvd irrezistibel in ðe end,
enebliñ men tu part wið œl ðe held mœst ðir and sekred, whœder kœrn lœz, or
Stuart dñnastiz, or pepal legets, or hiiden idolz, i dout not dāt ðe efit and kœrsœt
ordografi wil folœ in ðe tren. Nœfonz hav befer nou genjd ðer numerikal figurz,
ðer leterz, ðer kronoloji, ðer wets and mezurz; and ðe Mr Pitman mœ not liv tu
si ðe rezsits ov hiz perseviriq and disinterested ekzerfonz, it rekwiřz nœ profetiq
pouer tu persiv dāt whœt at prezœnt iz pu-puad bi ðe meni, wil mek its we in ðe
end, œnles met bi arguments stronger ðan ðœz hidertu leveld at ðe *Fœnetik Nyz*.
Wœn argument whiq mjt bi sœpœzd tu we wið ðe studeñt ov langwejq, nemli, ðe
obskurefon ov ðe etimolojikol strœktur ov wœrdz, i kanœt konsider veri formid-
abel. ðe prœnsisefon ov langwejqez genjez akordiñ tu fikst lœz, ðe spelig œ
genjd in ðe mœst arbitrari maner, sœ dāt if our spelig folœd ðe prœnsisefon ov
wœrdz, it wud in rialiti bi a greter help tu ðe kritikal studeñt ov langwejq ðan ðe
prezœnt œnsœrten and œnsientifik mœd ov ritiñ."

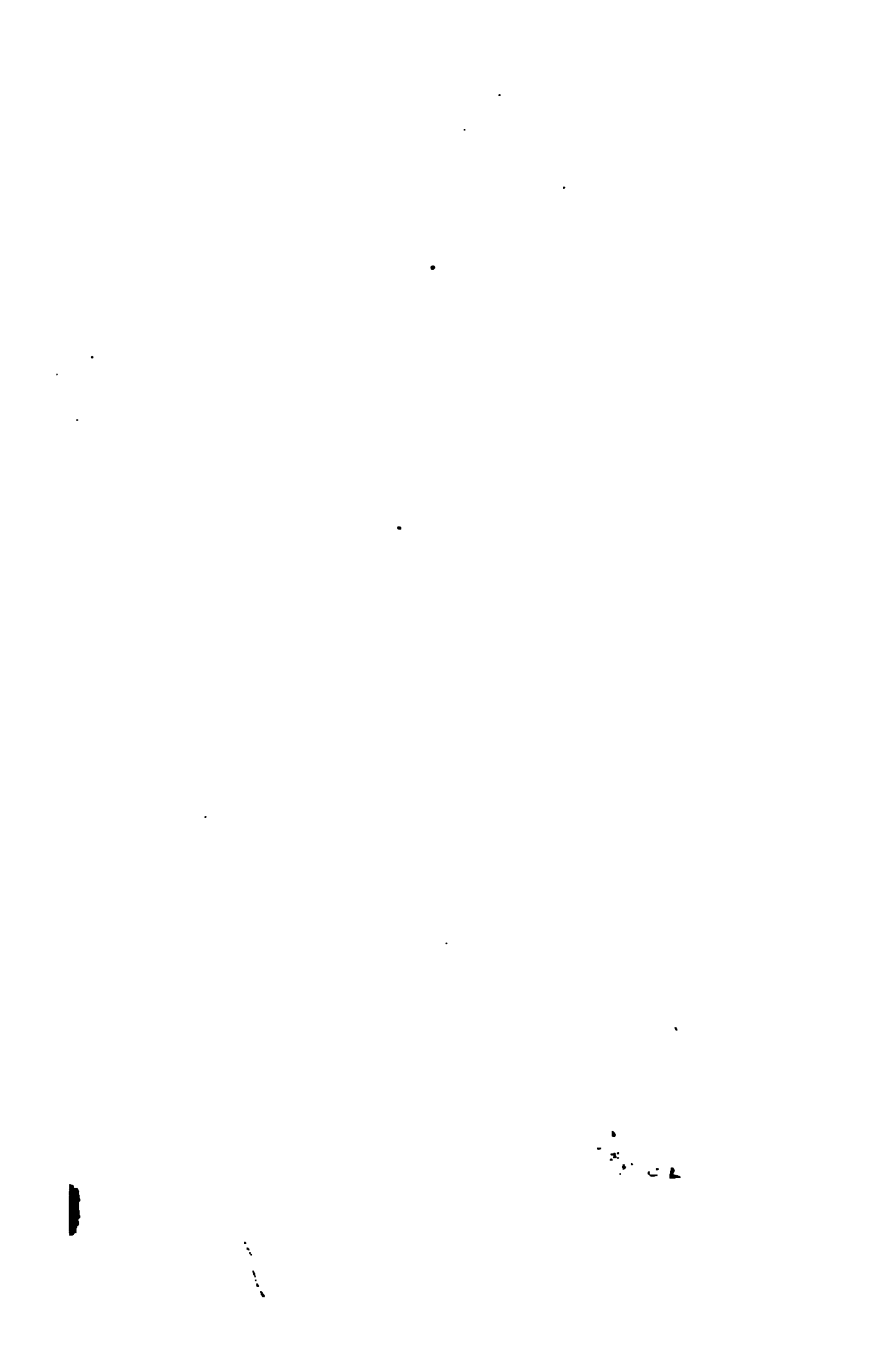
œut ov 1,972 felurz in ðe Sivil Servis Ekzaminefonz, 1,866 kandidœts wer plœkt
for spelig.

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